

The Humanist Interpretation of Hieroglyphs
in the Allegorical Studies of the Renaissance

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The Humanist Interpretation of Hieroglyphs in the Allegorical Studies of the Renaissance

With a Focus on the Triumphal Arch of Maximilian I

By

Karl Giehlow

Translated with an Introduction & Notes by

Robin Raybould

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II INTRODUCTION

KARL GIEHLOW'S MONOGRAPH, *Die Hieroglyphenkunde des Humanismus in der Allegorie der Renaissance*, was published posthumously in 1915¹ and has since been recognized as a classic and pioneering statement on the origin and history of the Renaissance obsession with Egyptian hieroglyphs. It has been described as a 'monumental study' by both Walter Benjamin² and Brian A. Curran,³ 'fundamental' and 'incomparable' by Erik Iversen,⁴ 'brilliant' by Helen Whitehouse,⁵ "invaluable" by George Boas, "magnificent" by Anthony Grafton⁶ and "a masterpiece" by Rudolf Wittkower.⁷ Needless to say, it is also cited with approval in many other modern texts on the subject. However, in spite of its importance to the field, it has never been translated into English.

The monograph begins as a commentary on the early sixteenth century Latin translation by Willibald Pirckheimer of the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollon which is contained in a manuscript Giehlow discovered in the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna (ms. 3255). The translation, which was probably the first into Latin from the original Greek text, was never finished and never printed but it was illustrated by Dürer and these illustrations have helped to ensure its fame and its survival. Horapollon's *Hieroglyphica*, a manuscript of which was discovered in the early fifteenth century on the Greek island of Andros, was a Greek translation of an Egyptian original probably from the fifth century CE which contained brief descriptions of the meaning of some one hundred and eighty-nine Egyptian hieroglyphs. The original text of the *Hieroglyphica* is divided into two books which are said in the sub-title to the book to have been translated into Greek from Egyptian by "Philip" an individual about whom nothing further is known. The two books are different in character; the second is more cursory and likely had a Greek rather than an Egyptian origin – it may have been composed by Philip himself. The *editio princeps* of the *Hieroglyphica* was published by Aldus in 1505 and the first printed Latin translations by Trebatius in 1515 and Fasanini in 1517 were just the beginning of a rapid diffusion of the work; there were approximately thirty-four further editions of the Horapollon by the mid seventeenth century. This popularity was occasioned by the great excitement among contemporary scholars who saw in the fusion of the form and content of the hieroglyph evidence of a primeval language in which the mysteries of ancient philosophy were embodied and in which the true nature of things could better be approached and understood.⁸ In fact, Horapollon's description of the meaning of his hieroglyphs was to a large extent fanciful although it has been shown that many of the interpretations in Book I and at least some of those in the beginning of Book II have links to the real meaning of the relevant hieroglyphs as now understood.⁹ Nevertheless, as Giehlow emphasizes, contemporary scholars making use of the Horapollon and the few other sources of hieroglyphic information from classical times available to them were unable to translate correctly any of the genuine hi-

eroglyphs which were still to be found on surviving Egyptian monuments, in particular those on the obelisks in Rome and elsewhere.

The early chapters of Giehlow's work also focus on the Triumphal Arch of Maximilian 1st, a magnificent woodcut, supposedly the largest ever made, comprising 192 separate pieces and measuring almost twelve by ten feet, which was also designed by Dürer. Using the manuscript he had discovered and translated Giehlow demonstrates for the first time that the centerpiece of the Arch, a picture of the emperor seated on a throne and surrounded by animals, is an allegory of which the individual elements are derived directly from the Horapollo.

This initial focus by Giehlow on the Horapollo, the Vienna manuscript and the Arch of Maximilian in Chapter 1 of the *Hieroglyphenkunde*, emphasized in the sub-title and the extensive appendices,¹⁰ is misleading as a guide to the whole work since these topics represent only a small part of this whole. Giehlow's ambitions which he defines at the end of his introductory chapter were much greater.

"I will limit myself to giving the general outline of the dynamics of the Egyptian Renaissance and examining some of its finest monuments. Within this cultural movement it seems to me that a salutary reference point always to bear in mind is the role of the Triumphal Arch of Maximilian I. If at the end of my attempts I have managed to lay the foundations for the history of allegory of the Renaissance, then I can be satisfied I have achieved the goal that I aimed for."

Thus the Horapollo and the Triumphal Arch, even if together they were the starting point and premise for Giehlow's work, were only initial examples from the wider field of the hieroglyphic, allegorical and literary symbolism of the period. He subsequently adduces further examples from the works of Colonna, Alberti, Annius, Crinito, Mantegna, Urbano, Erasmus, Ficino, Beroaldo, Valeriano, Alciato and others all of whom made contributions to theories of symbolism or studies of hieroglyphics in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Thus, in Chapter 2, he describes the references to Egyptian culture by classical and medieval authors and by early Italian humanists such as Cyriaco, Biondo, Niccoli, Ficino and Filelfo. In a second part of the chapter, he returns to the classical sources and the influence in the Renaissance of the discovery and the translation of the works of Eusebius, Diodorus, Herodotus, Apuleius, Clement of Alexander and Plutarch. Chapter 3 is concerned with the history of the obelisks of Rome, their excavation and reerection and the contemporary interpretations of their hieroglyphic inscriptions. In this chapter, the contribution of Leon Baptista Alberti to the theory of hieroglyphics is outlined as is that of later humanists and artists such as Leonardo. A further section is devoted to a description of the "hieroglyphs" of some of the most famous Renaissance medals and another to the forgeries of Annius of Viterbo.

The next chapter, Chapter 4, is devoted to Francesco Colonna and the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* and despite the abundance of literature published on this book since Giehlow's time much of his exposition is relevant and illuminating. On the one hand, he acknowledges Colonna's romantic enthusiasm for the classical past, an enthusiasm which he, Giehlow, expresses fulsomely as deriving from an

"imagination (which) could see the splendor of antiquity in an even more dazzling manner, even more grandiose its construction, more luxurious the life that was lived, more enchanting its cults, its wisdom more rich in secrets."

But Giehlow also believed that Colonna deserves recognition as someone who made a pioneering and even scholarly contribution to the early diffusion of hieroglyphic knowledge. He then discusses the origin of the hieroglyphic inscriptions observed by Poliphilo, the vexed question as to the relationship between Colonna's work and the *De Re Aedificatoria* of Alberti and the problems of the relationship between certain illustrations of the *Hypnerotomachia* and the frescoes of the Santa Giustina in Padua which bear on the dating of the former. Two more sections of this chapter briefly describe the influence of the mystical doctrines of Pico della Mirandola on Colonna and the origin of the images in the *Hypnerotomachia* and the possible identity of the illustrator.

The next chapter, Chapter 5, as the title suggests, is concerned with expositions on hieroglyphs by Italian writers and artists in the Cinquecento in particular Poliziano, Crinito and Mantegna. This is followed by further sections on the publication history, diffusion and influence of both the *Hypnerotomachia* and the *Horapollo*. Both these sections, for greater comprehension and a more orderly arrangement of the text, might have been included in the principal chapters on these two topics but Giehlow chooses to consider them with other developments from the Cinquecento. He ends this chapter with several sections on the life of Fra Urbano Bolzano and his influence on Renaissance culture and in particular his relationship with Erasmus. Chapter 6 contains a detailed exposition of the *Hieroglyphica* of Pierio Valeriano Bolzano and this perhaps is the most illuminating chapter of the whole work. Giehlow has obviously absorbed the *Hieroglyphica* from cover to cover and refers to and provides quotations from many of the dedications with which Valeriano introduces each of his fifty-eight chapters and the study of which, as Giehlow says "has not yet been exploited for research on humanism, and could go well beyond the scope that I have proposed in the present work." From the dedications Giehlow extracts details of Valeriano's life, the dating of the successive chapters of the book, his relationship with the dedicatee and the interpretation of the "hieroglyphs" he designed for them.

In spite of Giehlow's early statement (Chapter 1) that "the Egyptian script hid highly erudite thinking, which probably contained the origin of the entire em-

blematic field,” his Chapter 7 on Alciato and the *Emblemata* by no means succeeds in demonstrating this. Again there has been a rich outpouring of work in the last half century on emblems in general and on Alciato in particular and it has become clear that the origin of the emblem literature is much more complex than Giehlow imagined. In effect, he recognizes this by only commenting on those Emblems which could be said to have a specifically hieroglyphic origin and in fact there are very few of these. He cites other Emblems which he shows are related to incidents in Alciato’s life and since these do not necessarily have any hieroglyphic reference, the rationale behind his presentation is not readily apparent. He dwells at length on the origin of emblems as illustrated epigrams and discusses the possible existence of a 1521 edition of the *Emblemata* which, as he confirms, is now generally acknowledged not to have existed. Finally, in several passages, he expresses doubt whether the hieroglyph was in fact the sole source of the emblem literature, for instance:

“The fables and proverbs of antiquity offered a limitless number of themes that could be turned into images. Moreover, the very form of the Greek Anthology was an invitation to draw freely from these themes.”

Giehlow came late to the scholarship of art. He was already 32 when in 1895 he abandoned a career as a public official and in the following year enrolled in the University of Berlin to study art history. From the beginning he focused on Maximilian 1st and the latter’s circle of artists especially Dürer. In 1898 he wrote his doctoral thesis on the Prayer Book of Maximilian,¹¹ and followed over the next ten years with further articles and lectures on Maximilian and on Dürer.¹² In 1907 he published an enlargement of his thesis on Maximilian’s Prayer Book with a focus on the interpretation of the symbolism of Dürer’s illustrations. Also during this period and certainly into late 1911 he was working on research into the German print-maker Glockendon. He died shortly after in 1913 at the early age of fifty.

In view of this overriding interest in Maximilian, Dürer and the Triumphal Arch, it comes as no surprise that this interest would be demonstrated in the early chapters of the *Hieroglyphenkunde*. This was Giehlow’s principal focus at the time and for most of his academic life and if he had finished and/or edited the work he might have changed the subtitle, *Particularly of the Triumphal Arch of the Emperor Maximilian I*, to emphasize his wider intentions. The fact was, as Arpad Weixlgärtner, Giehlow’s editor, makes clear in his Nachwort [Postscript], the book was never completed. Only two-thirds of it, the first six chapters, were ready for the press. Chapter 7 on Alciato and the *Emblemata* was uncorrected and the last few pages lack any of Giehlow’s copious footnotes. Chapter 8 was available in two versions in manuscript and only two pages of these versions were thought by the editor to be worthy of publication. Then there were the seven unwritten chapters. As for the Appendices, they were added by Weixlgärtner

from Giehlow's notes, papers and literary estate and in one case (Appendix 10) compiled by the editor himself. The introduction to Appendix 3, a technical description of the Vienna manuscript, is by Giehlow and is dated by him 1899 and thus, as Weixlgärtner points out, must represent the starting point and kernel of the work. But the salient point is that, according to Weixlgärtner, the manuscript of chapters 1 to 6 is dated 22 January 1901 to 17 February 1902 and this early date is confirmed by Giehlow himself in a note in an article from 1903¹³ where he gives the exact title of his work as we know it. But after 1902 there was a hiatus and in eleven more years he only managed to write one more rather unsatisfactory chapter. Completion of the book was not therefore prevented by his death as has been generally assumed.

Giehlow's scholarly achievements during the five years after he had begun his studies were extraordinary. He engaged on the writing projects referred to above. He discovered Pirckheimer's manuscript of the Horapollo and other manuscripts which he reports in his other essays. He read all those Renaissance and modern authorities in the field which are cited in the 160 folio pages of the published *Hieroglyphenkunde* including the whole of the *Hieroglyphica* of Valeriano in addition, as he says, to engaging in "a prolonged study of the text" of Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*.¹⁴ His knowledge of Dürer was recognized as preeminent particularly by Aby Warburg¹⁵ and he sustained his enthusiasm for his new thesis on hieroglyphics sufficiently to research and write 100,000 words on the subject in just over a year. Then for all intents and purposes his interest in the field of the diffusion of hieroglyphics during the Renaissance came to an end.

His enthusiasm and his achievement, represented by the *Hieroglyphenkunde*, should no doubt be viewed in the context of the long debate on the origins of the Renaissance and its art which absorbed art historians during the nineteenth century. On the one hand, there was the faction inspired by Winckelmann and Burckhardt that the Renaissance was the rebirth of an "Hellenic" ideal which reached its high point in the work of Raphael and Leonardo but declined quickly in the 16th century, a view that was also supported in the 20th century by Panofsky and Gombrich. Then there were those who promoted the idea first proposed by Vasari that the Renaissance could be characterized as a turn to naturalism away from the structured religious art of the Middle Ages, a trend which according to him had had its beginning at least two centuries before Raphael. A later generation of art historians, Henry Thode and Aby Warburg, drew attention to the roots of the Renaissance in vernacular culture and in the ubiquitous religious and secular festivals of the time, characterizing it as primarily a populist and social phenomenon. Giehlow proposed and championed a fourth alternative: that Renaissance art as a whole was the product of a symbolism that, in his view, was ultimately based on the rediscovery of Egyptian art and its script, the hieroglyph. He says:

“the Horapollo translated by Pirckheimer and illustrated by Dürer therefore demonstrates a trend that seems to have influenced the artistic development of humanism in the same way that the entire Roman cultural universe was influenced by the conquest of Egypt.”

This is a thesis which is difficult to sustain except in the limited sense that for the humanists the hieroglyph was a species of the wider genre, the symbol. Giehlow in his pioneering study of hieroglyphics had glimpsed the truth that symbolism was an ubiquitous feature of medieval and Renaissance art and culture but failed to see although he makes passing reference to medals, devices, proverbs, epigrams, symbols, arms, cyphers and the *symbola* of Pythagoras that the hieroglyph which in many instances he conflated with the symbol itself should be categorized as one of the many species of the latter. This diversity of the symbol particularly the literary symbol is emphasized continually by contemporary scholars. Henri Estienne, in his treatise *L'Art de faire les Devises*¹⁶ of 1645 expressed the belief that one should distinguish between devices, hieroglyphs, enigmas, symbols, fables, parables, emblems, sentences, reverses of medals, arms, blazons, cimiers, cyphres and rebuses. Emanuele Tesauro in his classic exposition of symbolic tropes in *Il Cannochiale Aristotelico* (Venice: Curti, 1678) gives examples of the symbol in the form of an Emblem, a Medal, a Device, a Hieroglyph and a Cipher and discusses dozens more such distinctions. Authors as diverse as Balthazar Gracian and Giordano Bruno did the same. Gracian enumerates many of the above forms and adds apologues, allegories, épopées, novels, metamorphoses, tales, jokes and paintings.¹⁷ Bruno, that maverick mystic, in a moment of lucidity, identifies twelve categories of the forms of matter and thirty-two processes for denoting signs.¹⁸ By the mid seventeenth century these categorizations had become so commonplace that they had entered the school curriculum. In one of many text-books of the time Obadiah Walker suggests that scholars should “take notice of remarkable Histories, Fables, Apologues (such as are not in Esop), Adagies if not in Erasmus, or Manutius, Hieroglyphicks, Emblems and Symbols.”¹⁹

When he began the *Hieroglyphenkunde*, having discovered the manuscript of the Horapollo, Giehlow saw his thesis as applying to all aspects of the culture of the Renaissance, artistic as well as literary, that is “the artistic development of humanism” as he says above, but it seems that as he progressed he realized that the task he had set himself was much too great and that in any event he was unable to sustain his principal argument that Renaissance allegory was based entirely on hieroglyphics and in particular on the discovery of the Horapollo. It would be otiose to list the very many times that he offers unsustained conjectures to support his arguments; we can take three examples from just one page, page 160 below: “Perhaps it was Bernardo who encouraged Crinito to put together everything he knew about hieroglyphics”; “One can suppose therefore that Crinito also relied on other statements of Marsilio and came to see in the hieroglyphs

a representation of the divine ideas.” And in particular the following where he admits himself that there is no evidence for his supposition:

“Therefore we can assume that he knew Horapollo well, although in brief notes in the *De honesta disciplina* about the more detailed hieroglyphic studies that he had conducted, there are no explicit references to it nor are there traces of any hieroglyph which could be associated with this author.”

Today it is a truism to say that the origins of the use of symbol and allegory in the art of the Renaissance go back to the earliest times in Western Europe. As one example, Clement of Alexandria in his *Stromata* acknowledged that the practice started with the Greek philosophers and endorsed it as follows: “it is, then, proper that the Barbarian philosophy, on which it is our business to speak, should prophesy also obscurely and by symbols.”²⁰ In alchemy, Hermetism and magic, in art, architecture, literature, medicine and other fields, through to the fourfold interpretation of the Scriptures and the realization by the Christian mystics of the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of achieving a direct knowledge of the nature of God, except by identification and absorption with the symbols of His Being revealed in the Book of Nature, all medieval and Renaissance culture was permeated with symbolism.

Giehlow’s work suffered then from the deficiencies of a pioneer. He drew conclusions which he would not have reached if he had had a wider knowledge of the field, conclusions which are not justified by the examples he adduces. In this regard, we can repeat the words which he himself directed against Pierio Valeriano:

“Immersed in his studies, the author came in the end to look at everything through an Egyptian lense so to speak, thus losing the ability to take a critical view whenever something did not fit his theories.”

In spite of these deficiencies, by drawing attention for the first time to an aspect of Renaissance culture which had hitherto been under-emphasized or unrecognized, Giehlow’s achievement was indeed exceptional. Paradoxically, by focusing on the hieroglyph, he showed that symbolism of all kinds and not just the symbolism of the hieroglyph was a central characteristic of Renaissance art, a characteristic which is now taken for granted. He demonstrated this contemporary obsession with symbolism through a masterly and ground-breaking review of the literature of the period, in particular Italian literature, thus widening a field which hitherto had been primarily confined to the plastic and decorative arts. Finally, he also showed, even if he overstated his case, the extent to which this fascination with the hieroglyph did influence Renaissance art and literature and raise questions which continued to exercise the imagination of artists and scholars until the time of Champollion and the Egyptologists of the nineteenth century.



THE TRANSLATION

Giehlow did not provide chapter headings in his original manuscript but only gave subject headings in the side margin. I have converted these to chapter and section titles. His notes are given as footnotes in the present translation which follows the wording of his citations precisely except that tom. is changed to vol., lib. to bk., s(eite). to p(age). and a. a. O. (am angegebenen Ort) to cit. My notes and commentary are given as side notes.

NOTES

1. In the *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen der allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, XXXII, 1, Vienna.

2. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Verso, 1998.

3. Brian A. Curran, 'De Sacrarum Litterarum Aegyptiorum Interpretatione. Reticence And Hubris In Hieroglyphic Studies Of The Renaissance: Pierio Valeriano And Annius Of Viterbo', *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 43/44, (1998/1999), pp. 139-182.

4. Erik Iversen, 'Hieroglyphic Studies of the Renaissance', *The Burlington Magazine* 100, No. 658 (Jan., 1958).

5. Helen Whitehouse in her review of Brian Curran's 'The Egyptian Renaissance. The Afterlife of Ancient Egypt in Early Modern Italy'. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2007, *Journal of the History of Collections* (2009) 21 (1): 143-144.

6. These last two quotations are from Boas' translation of the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo, Princeton University Press, 1993 in the Introduction p. 33 and the Foreword p. xxi, nt. 16 respectively.

7. Rudolf Wittkower, *Allegory and the Migration of Symbols*, Thames and Hudson, 1977 p. 211 nt. 4.

8. See for instance M. P. Dinet, *Cinq Livres des Hieroglyphiques*, Paris 1614 Préface, "La cognoissance des quelles (Hieroglyphiques) puisée pour la plupart des principes et secrets de la nature des choses."

9. The latest known genuine hieroglyphic inscription is dated August 24th 394 CE. See Richard Parkinson, *The Rosetta Stone*, The British Museum Press, 2012, p. 19.

10. These appendices were added to the *Hieroglyphenkunde* by Giehlow's editor Arpad Weixlgärtner and taken from the former's drafts, working papers and literary estate after his death in 1513.

11. *Kristische Darstellung der Forschungen über die Die entstehungsgeschichte des Gebetbuches Kaiser Maximilian I* published in Vienna in 1899.

12. See the Introduction to the Italian edition of the *Hieroglyphenkunde* edited by M. Ghelardi and S. Müller, Nino Aragno, 2004 pp. ix and x for further details of these publications.

13. 'Dürer's Stich 'Melancholia I' und der maximilianische Humanistenkreis', *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für vervielfältigende Kunst*, 1903, p. 29, nt. 1.

14. See p. 130 below.

15. After Giehlow's death, Warburg attempted to persuade Weixlgärtner to lend him the former's papers so that he, Warburg, could work on finishing the text. See the Introduction to the Aragno edition cited in note 12 above. It is not clear why Weixlgärtner refused to do this especially since he says in his Nachwort that the papers would be made available to scholars. Ludwig Volkmann in his work cited in the Bibliography goes some way to completing the unfinished chapters of Giehlow by describing the diffusion of the knowledge of hieroglyphics north of the Alps.

16. These categorizations appear as the subtitle to Blount's *The art of making devices*, Thomas Blount, London: WE & JG 1646, his translation of Estienne's work. *L'art de faire les Devises* Paris: Jean Pâlé, 1645. This Estienne, Sieur des Fosses, should not be mistaken

for his namesakes, the Henri Estiennes, who were members of the illustrious French publishing family of the previous century.

17. Arturo Ruiz, *Gracian, Wit and the Baroque Age* New York: Lang, 1996, p. 242.

18. Giordano Bruno, *De imaginum, signorum, et idearum compositione* Frankfurt: 1591, vol. I, p. 8.

19. Obadiah Walker, *Of Education, especially of young Gentlemen*, 1673 cited in Michael Bath, *Speaking Pictures* London: Longman, 1994, pp. 38-39.

20. Clement *Stromata* V. 7-9.

CHAPTER 1

☪ SCOPE AND AIM OF THE STUDY

☛ *The discovery of a copy of Pirckheimer's translation of Horapollo illustrated by Dürer*

In those days there were often attempts to depict things that were not actually visible but were nevertheless rich in significance and similarity such as idioms, figures of speech, proverbs and political maxims. And when these illustrated sayings were not comprehensible, then a text was added". In such a manner Herder described the "symbolic emblems" which were published in large numbers at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In vain he tried to discover the cause of this curious literary phenomenon, for which not surprisingly there may never be found a complete explanation. That may be so but Herder argued that in any age of great poetry there usually follows a period of reaction in which the quality of both the art and the ideas decline and in which there develops an obsession for artificial detail. At the same time it should be noted that to some degree the emblematic poem had actually already started to flourish much earlier and, although it can be said that the political situation at the end of that era hindered the development of important spontaneous poetry which could reveal and conceal ideas, do not forget that these "symbols" or emblems were popular even in periods in which such things were expressed "in a truly free and intrepid and bold manner". For example in another context Herder remarked that this usage was typical of the German emblems created before and during the Reformation so that it can be concluded that during each of these periods conditions were quite different and usage was in accordance with the custom of the particular time.¹

It is true that for Herder this unique practice of associating image and motto in the emblem derived first from the custom of "painting shields and emblems to put on coat of arms and helmets" and then from the imitation "of ancient monastic paintings". But, although this survival of heraldry and medieval allegory may explain the forms of individual emblems, it can-

¹ John Valentine Andreae (1586-1654) referred to in nt. 1 was a prolific theologian who has traditionally been associated with alchemy and the origin of the Rosicrucians as a result of his book *Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreutz* which appeared in 1616 soon after the publication in 1614 of the handbook of the Rosicrucians, the *Fama Fraternitatis*. Andreae, himself, denied the association and this is now accepted by most modern commentators. A modern commentary on the *Chymische Hochzeit* is J. W. Montgomery's *Cross and Crucible*. 2, *The Chymische Hochzeit with notes and commentary*, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973.

¹ The initial quotation is taken from the work of Herder (Hempel ed.), vol. XV, p. 248, where, in the fifth collection of *Zerstreute Blätter*, it is reprinted in his exposition of the parables of Joh. Val. Andreae (published in 1618). This text of Herder is dated June 14, 1793. The other passage of Herder is on p. 317 in the essay on *Andenken an einige ältere deutsche Dichter*.

not account for the care with which whole sentences were faithfully translated into images nor for the rapid spread of the fashion. It was precisely for this reason that Herder was not able to find an answer to his question.

This explanation has so far been accepted for the history of German literature. In fact, even today the story of the development and taste for the symbolic is shrouded in darkness, and the individual sources of the phenomenon have not yet been identified. Goedeke,² for example, in his compendium was content to enumerate the influence of Italian celebrities such as Alciatoⁱⁱ and the Dutch and French sources; and even spe-

ⁱⁱ Andrea Alciato was the author of the first emblem book published in Augsburg in 1531 probably without his authority but its popularity was such that the extraordinary total of 180 editions of his *Emblemata* was published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe. Formerly known by the name Alciati it is now accepted that this is the genitive of Alciatus, the Latin version of his name, and that the correct vernacular spelling is Alciato.

Fig. 1 The
"misterium
of the
ancient
Egyptian



ⁱⁱⁱ Johann Fischart (1545-1591) is often said to be the most accomplished German writer of the latter part of the sixteenth century. He did a number of translations and his greatest work, the *Geschichtsklitterung* (1572, 1575, and 1590), was an adaption and expansion of Rabelais' *Gargantua*. The vocabulary, enlarging on Rabelais' already exotic language, is so difficult that it has never been translated.

cialist research is still limited to asserting the recreational use of rebuses, puzzles and so on, those typical elements of allegorical and illusionist texts of the time, without further elucidating their meaning. Even Johann Fischart,³ⁱⁱⁱ despite having mocked the "writers of emblems", was actually enthusiastic about them. In short, there is still no comprehensive survey

² Karl Goedeke, *Grundriss zur Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung aus den Quellen*, vol. II, Dresden 1883, pp. 124 and 484.

³ See I. I. A. A. Frantzen, *Kritische Bemerkungen zu Fischarts Uebersetzung von Rabelais Gargantua*, in *Alsation Studies*, vol. 3, Strassburg 1892, and P. Besson, *Etudes sur Jean Fischer*, Paris 1889.

that shows, as Herder had hoped, how the obsession for emblems emerged from the dominant cultural trends of the age. The accurate compilations of Green,^{4,iv} containing the emblems of Alciato, while providing a summary of the literature do not reveal the fundamental origins of the subject.

Herder had already clearly argued that literary studies alone were unable to grasp the mystery of this unique cultural movement, although he recognized the interaction that this taste for emblems had provoked between art and poetry. In so doing he provided a valuable explanation of how so much of this interaction had been able to influence German book illustration. Herder recommended that he “who loves to study and collect German woodcuts and engravings,” should research the matter thoroughly and he suggested that an art-historical examination could help in the solution of these puzzles. So in his research he came close to approaching the heart of the matter. “You will pardon me,” he wrote, “if I do not comment on those famous literary creations with which we praise a sovereign, such as “Theurdank”, “Weisskunig” and so on, if for no other reason than because up to now I have had no time to read them.^{5,v} Above all how much I still have to read and how much reading I could have done without it!” If Herder had taken one step further he would have been confronted by the Triumphal Arch of Maximilian I, and would have been able to continue on a path that would have led him to see the deeper origins of not only the allegories in that work but, above all, of emblems in general.

Since this large woodcut has been analyzed by several authoritative sources, we must also be willing to dwell on it here.^{6,vi} The last scholar who addressed it, Eduard Chmelarz, rightly showed that the representation of the Triumphal Arch of Dürer gathered together all the aspects that other literary and artistic creations for the Emperor had expressed in more detail. In short, Chmelarz showed satisfactorily that it summed up the life, ambitions, sense of duty and the inclinations of the diverse personality of Maximilian I, even if he is silent on the fact that the content is delivered here through the medium of

iv Henry Green was the first modern emblem theorist. In addition to the title referenced in nt. 4 he published with the Holbein Society a facsimile of and commentary on *Whitney's Choice of Emblems* (1866) and the same on Alciato in *Four Fountains of Alciato* (1870). He also published *Shakespeare and the Emblem Writers* London: Trübner, 1872. Green says that he has identified some 3,000 emblem books and since his time this total number identified has increased to a figure approaching 7,000. The scholarship and bibliography on the emblem has expanded proportionately.

v *Theurdank* and *Weisskunig* were allegorical biographies of the Emperor Maximilian I supposedly at least partly dictated by the Emperor himself. *Theurdank* was published: by Peutinger in Augsburg in 1517.

vi The most comprehensive description of the Triumphal Arch, its allegories, artists, printing history and bibliography is that by Campbell Dodgson in his *Catalogue of early German and Flemish Woodcuts I*, British Museum 1903 pp. 311-328. The notes to this description also include references to Giehlow's previous works on the subject. In spite of its date it is not cited by Giehlow in the present work most likely because this part of the *Hieroglyphenkunde* had already been completed by 1903; see the Introduction to the present translation.

⁴ Henry Green, *Andrea Alciato and His books of emblems, a biographical study*, London 1872. Before this edition, Green had published some editions of the emblems of Alciato in facsimile with the Holbein Society.

⁵ See Herder, *Andenken an einige deutsche Dichter* cit., p. 317.

⁶ Thausing, *Dürer*, Leipzig 1884, vol. II, pp. 118 ff. and Ed. Chmelarz, *Die Ehrenpforte des Kaisers Maximilian I.*, in *Jahrbuch IV* (1886), p. 290.

emblems. If we assume that the emblem, as a symbol-pattern that alluded in a concealed manner to both an image and a verse, in fact performed a decorative function, then we can argue that these elements can correctly be captured in such a representation. Fischart in fact did argue that this continuous transition from art to poetry can be described as “pictorial poetry”, with the theme an exemplary prince as “didactic painting” and the purpose of the work as wall decoration or in the form of the ornate decoration of emblematics. The way in which the creators of this work of art have managed to conceal the ideas behind it, is demonstrated very well in the single image placed “in the tabernacle above the title” on the front of the main dome, which has so far escaped any interpretation (see Fig. 1). Like a trainer sitting equipped with armor, the Emperor is surrounded here by several animals and by human limbs and although the court historian Stabius in his commentary on the Triumphal Arch^{vii} defined these figures as “a mystery of ancient Egyptian letters, from all-knowing Osiris,”^{viii} attempting in this way to provide an analytical interpretation, he nevertheless failed to explain satisfactorily the link between this representation and the Emperor’s panegyric.^{ix}

Moreover, since the Physiologus, the bestiaries and the animal books have never been able to provide an interpretation of these symbols, Fischart himself hastily tried to solve the riddle, mocking the honorable Stabius for concluding that not only this image, but even the entire decorative ornament of the Arch was nothing but fantasy. It is obvious that the main reasons for this are closely connected and should be focused on the frontispiece.⁸ Although the circle of scholars around Maximilian I produced unique results, it is more difficult to understand to what extent we can expect that, at least for men of the time, these results also possessed real scientific value. Otherwise it was the artist’s ability alone, in this case that of Dürer, through which in these figurative works serious ideas became veiled fantasies. It is all too obvious that the mystery of the Egyptian script hid highly erudite thinking, which probably contained the origin of the entire emblematic field and in fact, as we shall see, if this analysis is developed following the lead of Herder, then we can resolve our initial questions about the

vii The plates from this edition have been reprinted in W. Uhl, *Die Ehrenpforte des Kaisers Maximilian I.*, Unterschneidheim 1972. The Triumphal Arch is also analyzed in Thomas Schauer, *Der Ehrenpforte für Kaiser Maximilian I.*, Munich, 1982 and in Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943. An online article with photographs is given in <http://cool.conservation-us.org/coolaic/sg/bpg/annual/v14/bp14-07.html> (6/6/2011) describing the copy in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

viii “Conspicitur etiam in tabernaculo, supra titulum, Mysterium Hieroglyphicum a Rege Osyride exortum”.

ix Ludwig Volkman, *Bilderschriften der Renaissance*, Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1923 p. 90 points to an echo of the *Hyperotomachia* in the pose in profile of the Emperor with a snake in front of him and the eagle behind him in the third circle on the plinth of the obelisk (*Hyperotomachia* fol. p7); see fig. 17 below.

⁷ See Chmelarz, *Das Diurnale oder Gebetebuch des Kaisers Maximilian I.* in *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* III (1885), pp. 88-102; the first half of these pages concerns the Triumphal Arch.

⁸ See Chmelarz, *Die Ehrenpforte* cit., p. 297.

meaning and importance of these figures in a completely unexpected manner.

The preparatory drawing for the engraver of the Triumphal Arch came from the student and friend of Dürer, Hans Springinklee,^{9,x} and given the division of labor necessary for the Triumphal Arch and the fate of the sketches, it was assumed from the outset that Springinklee kept a copy of the originals which over the years must have been lost. As it is not difficult to trace some of the Dürer drawings that have a clear relationship to this enigmatic representation, it is puzzling that so far no research on this suggestion has been undertaken. Thus, for example, the dog wearing a sort of stole and which in the woodcut is positioned to the left of the emperor, is depicted in reverse on a sheet now preserved in the collection of Adalbert Ritter di Lanna [see Appendix 6]. The same sheet also shows two men seated, one with a stick in his left hand, the other with an hourglass to his mouth. What's more, in the foreground there is a bucket of water next to a flame.¹⁰ On the back, a Latin text defines the man with the unusual design of the hourglass as the symbol of a horoscope. These drawings are numbered continuously from 38 to 41. From this we can deduce that it is a fragment of a work illustrated by Dürer that must have contained at least 37 more such sketches. In fact, a fortunate coincidence has recovered from oblivion more of these pages, now in the Blasius collection.¹¹ These sketches, marked by a single hand with the numbers 22^{xi} and 37, show a lion approaching two pitchers and a long-haired dog. In the same collection there is another sheet with the sketch of a quadruped like a goat that bears the number 47 [See Appendix 7], a fact which suggests that originally this set of illustrations must have been larger. It is just the lack of numbering that prevents us deciding – despite the stylistic similarities – if another drawing in the Blasius' collection depicting a frog was part of this series. So even if we accept the loss of a large number of drawings by Dürer for this series, it can still be argued that these eight sheets together with the text written on the reverse offer

^x It is now understood that the first sketches of the Arch were made by the Court historian Georg Kölderer perhaps even at the direction of Maximilian himself. See Larry Silver and Jeffrey Smith, *The Essential Dürer*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010, p. 137. The essay by Schmidt referred to in nt. 9 has been digitized by the University of Heidelberg.

^{xi} This drawing is actually numbered 27.

⁹ See the essay by Wilhelm Schmidt in *Chronik für vervielfältigende Kunst* IV, ed. Dr. Richard Graal (1891), p. 10.

¹⁰ The paper is reproduced in F. Lippmann, *Zeichnungen von Dürer*, Berlin 1882, no. 82/3, then still in the possession of Mr. Mitchell. Meanwhile, the drawing was purchased by Adalbert Ritter di Lanna, Prague. I thank the current owner for allowing me to see his treasures repeatedly and to have been able to photograph the drawing. I have been provided the same generosity by Prof. Blasius of Braunschweig.

¹¹ See the reproductions in Lippmann cit., vol. VI (1888), nos. 149-152.

sufficient evidence to establish the content of the work.

As a result of this attempt to interpret the fragments of the Blasius collection it can be confirmed that four other designs come from the same manuscript. Even the previous owner of the designs of Blasius, Hausmann,¹² knew that the writing on the back of the sketches was thought to be that of Willibald Pirckheimer.^{xii} Then Thausing,¹³ who had come across the words “horoscope”, suggested that they were fragments of an astrological text of Pirckheimer and drawings of star constellations by Dürer. He even believed that he had discovered drawings of other animals in different collections and thought he could show in another drawing, then in possession of Hausmann and now of Blasius, the border of the title page of the work. Then Ephrussi¹⁴ took the same line and associated other drawings of animals with the work. Of course, the astrological interpretation of the text is compelling, given that Dürer had actually created astrological tables for Stabius which were actually in press in 1515, the moment when the project for the Triumphal Arch was under way.¹⁵ But in truth the explanation on the back of this enigmatic page, although obviously closely tied to what were likely astrological patterns, does not contain evidence that shows us any connection with a horoscope for Maximilian I. In fact, the text of Pirckheimer, which Stabius made use of, had other purposes.

The enigmatic image of the man who is swallowing time gives us a useful clue; that the hourglass symbolizes time is revealed by an explanation on the back of the design: “not that man can really eat the hours, but his life is assured to him by the passing of the hours”. The image is thus an example of emblematics pure and simple, one the meaning of which seems incomprehensible at first sight and indeed, without the original text, the meaning is as hidden and obscure as the link between the woodcut and the comment of Stabius. If we do not let ourselves be deceived by appearances, the analysis of the emblematic text after the woodcut can put us on the right track.

¹² C. Ephrussi, *Albert Dürer et ses dessins*, Paris 1882, p. 348, nt. places these drawings in the Gigoux Collection, but judges them as not original. Lippmann attributes them to Dürer but is silent on their relationship with the drawing in the collection of Lanna.

¹³ See Thausing cit., p. 222.

¹⁴ Ephrussi cit., p. 348.

¹⁵ See Edmund Weiss, *Albert Dürers Geographische, Astronomische und Astrologische Tafeln*, in *Jahrbuch der Sammlungen des Kunsthistorischen Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses VII* (1888), pp. 207 ff.

xii For a brief biography of Pirckheimer see Volkmann cit., p. 82.



Fig. 2
Vigilance.
Hieroglyph
from the
French
edition of the
Horapollo,
Jacques
Kerver 1553



Fig. 3 *The Impossible.*
Hieroglyph
from the
French
edition of the
Horapollo,
Jacques
Kerver 1553

Once we embark on this path it is easy to recognize the importance of the book in French several editions of which Jacques Kerver published in Paris in the mid-sixteenth century. In this, the unusual woodcuts and the obscurity of the text just like the allegory of the Triumphal Arch reflect the study of emblems. Some illustrations even contain elements borrowed from woodcuts and etchings by Dürer.¹⁶ But even more significant is the obvious and almost perfect conformity between the symbols of the title of Stabius^{xiii} and the cycle of woodcuts in this French work.^{xiv} Not only is there a match with the crane on one leg, the bull, and the various snakes, but also the two feet in the water

^{xiii} That is as stated above, "a mystery of ancient Egyptian letters, from all-knowing Osiris". Giehlow is referring here to the frontispiece showing the Emperor surrounded by the symbolic animals.

^{xiv} There does not appear to be any direct relationship between any of Kerver's images and either the drawings in Pirckheimer's manuscript or to the animals depicted with the Emperor in the frontispiece to the manuscript.

¹⁶ See below for information concerning the study of hieroglyphics in France and in particular those relating to issues concerning the Horapollo of Kerver.

^{xv} The first French edition by Kerver was in 1543. It is suggested by Brunon ('Signe, figure, langage: Les Hieroglyphica d'Horapollo, *L'Emblème à la Renaissance* ed. Yves Giraud, Paris SEDES/CDU, 1982) that the rather poor translation is the one acknowledged by Geoffrey Tory. Kerver's 1551 edition is in Latin and Greek with seven new images. Five of these new images are taken from the *Hypnerotomachia*.

^{xvi} This omission is perhaps not surprising for a French edition; see nt. xx below.

and the dogs in different positions. Moreover, there is the convergence in the manuscript fragments of the Latin with the French texts, although in the latter the astrological symbol is interpreted more freely.^{17,xv} The fact that in the French manuscript the dog, instead of wearing a scarf, is sitting next to the royal coat decorated with a lily, is a difference that probably dates back to the translator (See fig. 4), while the replacement of the hourglass with the clock pendulum can only be an interpretation of the artist who opts for the most common instrument of his time (See fig. 5). The only surprising thing is the lack of any allusion in these French editions to the hawk located above the orb of Maximilian I. Absent too is the rooster,^{xvi} while the illustrations are devoid of any reference that looks like the bundle of rods on which, in the Latin manuscript, the emperor sits. On the other hand, the title of the French translation indicates that it contains the sacred sculptures from Horapollo translated from the Egyptian into Greek by a certain Philip, i.e. hieroglyphs or, to quote Stabius, "the ancient Egyptian letters", confirmation that this is sufficient to connect the text to the fragments of Dürer and the Triumphal Arch. Therefore we should further analyze these uncertainties and the span of several decades between the drawings of Dürer and the French edition so as to connect more precisely the allegories of the frontispiece and Horapollo's work.

Fig. 4 A magistrate.
Hieroglyph from the
French edition of the
Horapollo, Jacques
Kerver 1553



¹⁷ The title of Kerver's edition is: Les sculptures ou graveures sacrées d'Orus Apollo, Niliaque, c'est à dire voysin du Nil, lesquelles il composa luy mesme en son langage, Egyptien et Philippe les meit en Grec, nouvellement traduit du Latin en François et imprimé avec les figures à chaque chapitre par Jacques Kerver, Parisiis 1553). The passage on the horoscope is as follows: "Comment ils exprimoient celuy qui observe la raison des heures. Pour le bien demonstrier, ils designoient un homme devorant quelque monstre d'horloge, non que il vueille dire qu'un personnage vive d'heures, car il ne seroit possible: mais c'estoit pour faire entendre qu'à certaines heures l'on appreste aux hommes leurs viandes, et leur met en devant pour les manger".

That these “sculptures sacrées” correspond to the hieroglyphics of Horapollo could be deduced from any good library catalogue. Although outdated in some of its details, the edition of Horapollo published in 1835 by the exceptional Egyptologist Leemans,^{18,xvii} has proved particularly valuable for both the insightful commentary and for the extensive bibliography that accompanies it. Both contributions help remove any final doubts and provide a summary of the surviving manuscripts. These show us how Dürer, following the first Greek edition published by Aldus Manutius in 1505, placed above the Emperor’s orb a hawk or sparrow or ἱεραξ as it is called in Greek while the French edition which we have referred to instead followed the translation of Trebazio from Vicenza, who had interpreted the bird as “an eagle”.^{xviii} Since in the spring of 1515 the Italian editor had dedicated his work to Konrad Peutinger, the literary and political adviser to the Emperor,^{xix} we can infer that already by that time the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo had been used directly for the design of the Triumphal Arch. Certainly, at first glance the rooster over the snake and the bundle of rods are difficult to understand. But even in this case an anonymous Latin codex of the Horapollo, listed by Leemans and preserved in the Imperial Library in Vienna¹⁹ will be a great help. So much so that from its description, copied from the catalog of Lambeccius, we can

xvii For a summary and listing including bibliographic data of the translations of the Horapollo see Sandra Sider, *Horapollo, Catalogus Translationum*, 6, eds. Cranz, F. E. and Kristeller, P. O., Catholic University of America Press, 1986, 15-29. The most complete critical edition of the Horapollo is F. Sbordone, *Hori Apollinis Hieroglyphica*, Loffredo, Naples, 1940. The edition of George Boas, *The Hieroglyphics of Horapollo*, reprinted in the Bollingen Series XXIII, Princeton University Press, 1993 has an excellent short introduction to the whole field of Renaissance symbolism but the English translation has been criticized as unreliable.

xviii There are two entries in Horapollo for the eagle (II.49 and II.96) and both of them are referred to as such in all of Kerver’s editions.

xix For more on the close relationship between Peutinger and the Emperor, see Volkmann cit., p. 81.



Fig. 5 Eating the Hours.
Hieroglyph from the
French edition of the
Horapollo, Jacques
Kerver 1553

say immediately that they match the title and the fragments of the translation illustrated by Dürer. In fact, according to the description, the initial image of the manuscript bears a very el-

¹⁸ Conradus Leemans, *Horapollinis Nile Hieroglyphica*, Amsterdam 1835.

¹⁹ See Leemans cit., p. XXVIII. With respect to the editions cited by Aldus Manutius and of Trebazio see p. XXIX, as well as an exhibition of these studies in Venice and Germany.

^{xx} The Latin for cockerel is 'gal-lus'.

^{xxi} The manuscript can be seen on line at http://aleph.onb.ac.at/F?func=file&file_name=login&local_base=ONBo6.

The drawing on the title page of Giehow's article is not the same as the one in the manuscript but, as he says, the former is a copy of the engraving from the Triumphal Arch. The manuscript drawing in two color wash is a simpler version. It is now generally assumed that the manuscript is a copy of both the original text and pictures which thus explains why the pictures are not the originals by Dürer. This copy was presented to the Emperor in 1514. For more details see L. Silver *Marketing Maximilian*. Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 34. The pictures were probably sketched by Dürer several to a page and then copied to accompany the appropriate text. For the location of the surviving original drawings and further discussion, see John Rowlands *Drawings by German Artists* London: British Museum Press, 1993 p. 85. A page of the original showing the sun, the moon and the basilisk is in the British Museum.

^{xxii} This naturally raises the question as to whether the remaining entries were lost or never completed. The latter is more likely.

^{xxiii} These are the photographs made from the original referred to in nt. 10 above.

egant image of the Emperor Maximilian I, who is seen sitting in triumph over the king of France. This probable interpretation refers to the rooster depicted at the feet of the emperor, even if the diplomatic commentary of Stabius does not interpret it as an allegory of Gaul.^{xx} We can assume that in all likelihood this manuscript of the Horapollo even helps to clarify the meaning of the bundle of rods.

Not without trepidation therefore, we opened this promising manuscript on the first page and behold we found the triumph of the Emperor Maximilian I, as we have got to know it from the woodcut on the title page (See fig. 1).^{xxi} Here are the hieroglyphs that were thought to be lost: the lion with three jugs of water, the frog, the rods with the unusual staff that must represent papyrus, and so on. The same hand that marked the fragments has numbered the drawings, so the order of the images can be determined in advance. The manuscript also explains in Latin the interpretation that Stabius had made of the picture on the cover, and even the hieroglyph for the horoscope is taken literally from this last and the fragments of text on the back complement each other word for word. In short, the entire first book of *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo with all its images, and the first entry in the second book without an illustration can be found in this manuscript.^{xxii}

Unfortunately the manuscript does not include, as we had hoped earlier, the original drawings by Dürer. Only two can in fact be taken as such;²⁰ the remainder, including the frontispiece are the work of a student, as is demonstrated by a comparison with the photographs of Dürer's original,^{xxiii} and the illustrations of the Viennese manuscript reproduced here with the text. But we must not be too demanding, for just being able to state with certainty how many of Dürer's drawings have been lost is a step forward in German research. Given that the

²⁰ I would like to commemorate Goldin von Tiefenau, head of manuscripts at the Library of the Viennese court, a generous scholar, who sadly died prematurely. He had always supported my work both in words and deeds.

²¹ The reproduction in facsimile [see Appendix 5] is provided to clear the doubts that have always arisen in the past in comparing the examples of the handwriting of Pirckheimer. Lippmann cit. (no. 83), for example judged it simply a Latin text, while the signature in no. 149-152 he considered as Pirckheimer's. Thausing and Ephrussi do not have any doubt that the handwriting on both fragments is Pirckheimer's. I thank the director of the State of Nuremberg, Dr. Mummenhof, for the photographic negative of the letter of Pirckheimer and also Dr. H. Stegmann of the German Institute for his help. The letter is printed in Willibald Pirckheimer, *Opera*, ed. M. Goldast, Frankfurt 1610, p. 401; the date is "ex Nuremberg Kal. Dec. 1516".

manuscript contains sixty-eight drawings of Dürer – the total number including the two originals amounts to seventy^{xxiv} – of which we know, thanks to the fragments mentioned, that there were eight original – we infer that the dispersion of the original manuscript must have resulted over the years in a loss of at least sixty sketches, a number which would increase by 119 if we assume that the artist must also have illustrated the second book of Horapollon. Hopefully future research on the work of Dürer may bring to light more of these hieroglyphs and to facilitate this identification we have reproduced copies of all the drawings from the manuscript of Horapollon [the Latin text of Pirckheimer's translation is not included in the present edition] and in the catalogue located in Appendix 3 [also not included in the present edition] I give the symbols from the second book with short interpretations. Of course, it would be a wonderful surprise if someone was able to fill in these gaps in the future.

To this result in the history of art there corresponds another in the field of humanistic literature. That the handwriting on the fragments is actually that of Willibald Pirckheimer is confirmed by a comparison (Appendix 5) of the reverse of the sheet of Lanna with an extract from an original letter from this scholar.²¹ The Viennese manuscript provides an example of Pirckheimer's translation which was much appreciated by his contemporaries and which was believed lost for more than three centuries if not longer. In this regard Goldast merely confines himself to indicating, completely wrongly, a "compilation" of "Orus Niliacus" issued by Pirckheimer while not noting the latter's translation.²²

The discovery of this manuscript sheds new light on an aspect of the spiritual life of the German humanists hitherto quite unknown, namely their interest in hieroglyphics. That the two most eminent scholars, Stabius and Pirckheimer, as well as the most brilliant artist in the circle around Maximilian I, had determined to commemorate their emperor and patron with these "ancient Egyptian letters" shows how important the humanists of the era judged this research. It also shows how carefully Maximilian I had followed and approved the project, a fact that illuminates a novel aspect of his personality, that is his interest in the beginnings of Egyptology.

The hieroglyphs of Horapollon are therefore the origin of "the mysterious image above the title" and since this image sums up the allegories of the whole Triumphal Arch, it can be said that

^{xxiv} It appears that Giehlow has miscounted. There are 73 drawings of which two on fol. 3 and fol. 62 are unnumbered and said to be pen and ink drawings by Dürer himself. In addition those on folios 37, 41 and 42 are unnumbered. Of the 73 drawings no.s 1, 3, 4, 22, 28, 31, 53, 55, 57 contain at least two separately drawn objects. The man in the moon is one of two in no.s 1 and 4 and on its own in no. 63.

²² See Goldast cit., p. 202, for further evidence with respect to participation in Pirckheimer's project for the Triumphal Arch.

^{xxv} See nt. viii above. The *Hieroglyphicum* is the interpretation by Stabius in Latin of the symbols surrounding the Emperor shown in Figure 1. Stabius' interpretation differs slightly from the interpretation given by Pirckheimer. An English translation is as follows: "A prince of great piety, most magnanimous, powerful and courageous, ennobled by eternal fame, descended from an ancient lineage, Roman Emperor, endowed with the gifts of nature, art and learning, master of a great part of the realms of the Earth, with warlike strength and discretion, a mighty conqueror over the king shown here, the watchful protector against impossible schemes of that enemy". Note that this hieroglyphic encomium differs again from the German inscription immediately below the image which presumably was also composed by Stabius. The exact correspondence of the inscription with Horapollon is shown in Volkmann cit., p. 88 where he compares each phrase with the corresponding chapter of Horapollon.

^{xxvi} Karl Richard Lepsius was an eminent German archaeologist of the mid 19th century and director of the Egyptian Museum. On one of his Egyptian archaeological expeditions he also had inscribed on the entrance to the great pyramid a dedication in hieroglyphs to the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm IV.

^{xxvii} Ernst Renan's *Averroes et L'Averroïsme* "was a historical-philosophical masterpiece, the first full monograph on Averroes, which put Renaissance philosophy on the philosophical map". *Printing and the Mind of Man*; London: Cassell, 1967 p. 352.

hieroglyphs contributed decisively to provide not just a fantastic form but a scholarly inspiration for its ornamentation. In short, the origin of the entire emblematic and allegorical composition can be traced to the influence of Horapollon. Having established this point, a more general question automatically follows: what if the *Hieroglyphica* was not only the inspiration for the decoration of the Triumphal Arch, but the source of the entire field of emblematics? To answer this question I begin by analyzing the relationship between this Egyptian work and the allegories of the Renaissance.

A thorough examination of the *Hieroglyphicum*^{xxv} of Stabius has convinced me of the need to broaden the scope of the research. Apart from the imperial eagle in the background, the Gallic rooster – as it was interpreted in the manuscript – is the only symbol that does not come directly from Horapollon. The use of this heraldic bird as a hieroglyph seems significant since it reveals an initial attempt in the Renaissance, like the Horapollon, to invent new hieroglyphs for concepts typical of the modern era.^{23,xxvi} Only if we consider this can we address the question whether or not the renewed study of Egyptian antiquities also directly influenced the revival of heraldry because as Eusebius had explained in his *De evangelica praeparatione*, with regard to Egyptian symbology, the custom of the Egyptians was to adorn their helmets with representations of animals.²⁴ This observation is another reason that leads us not only to analyze the influence of the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollon but also to track all the ancient authors who referred to hieroglyphs. This assumption is certainly the view of Renan,^{xxvii} according to whom the Renaissance was essentially a literary phenomenon and the evidence that the humanists would have been very familiar with antique texts on hieroglyphs is a fact that must also have resonance with their complementary allegories. To avoid getting bogged down in an almost endless

²³ Similarly, Lepsius used heraldic signs to designate the modern German States when he used hieroglyphics in the founding document of the portico of the Egyptian Museum in Berlin.

²⁴ See Eusebius of Caesarea, *De evangelica praeparatione*. The edition of the Library of the Court of Vienna was published in 1501 by Bernardinus Vercellensis. There is a note that reads that it was acquired in 1510 and that it was owned by the monastery of St. Quirino on the Tegernsee. The passage quoted above (Eusebius, bk. II, ch. I) was inserted by Flavio Biondo in his *Roma triumphans*, Basileae 1531, p. 5: "effigies animalium ab Aegyptiis imperatoribus in galeis sculptas ferri solitas in praelio, quibus principes insigniores forent". See below for the passage on the Latin translations of Greek references to the hieroglyphs.

study, we must give ourselves some limits and restrict the analysis to the primary sources dealing with hieroglyphics, that is especially Herodotus, Plato, Diodorus, Pliny, Tacitus, Lucan, Plutarch, Apuleius, Clement of Alexandria, Plotinus, Iamblichus, Eusebius, Ammianus, Marcellinus and Macrobius.

The analysis does not fail to reveal significant traces of the intense interest that the Italian and French humanists devoted to hieroglyphics although you can certainly say that the driving force of such studies was first from individuals from Italy, rather than from northern humanist countries. Only at a later stage should the independent contribution of the German and French hieroglyphic scholars and their influence on the allegories of the Renaissance be considered. Indeed, one can address first the revival of Egyptian antiquities in the south and then later examine the countries north of the Alps, as would be the case for the rediscovery of the ancient authors.

☞ *The meaning of Horapollo for modern Egyptology*

So as to better assess the researches of the humanists themselves²⁵ we should briefly review what has now been recognized as the increasing importance of the ancient sources during the last century.

It was the brilliant Champollion who was first able to show that hieroglyphic writing was based on phonetics, that is to say on an alphabet and he also discovered that interpretive characters or signs were added to the phonetic words which were intended to address the lack of word division or to clarify the meaning of a word in what were numerous cases of homonymy. Until then, based on Horapollo, hieroglyphs were understood merely as an ideographic script, like a rebus, where a particular image corresponded to each term. This latter was a view that even the great archaeologist Georg Zoega^{xxvii} had argued in his magnificent research on obelisks.

^{xxvii} Georg Zoega, *De Origine et Usu Obeliscorum*, Rome: 1797.

However, Champollion realized that hieroglyphs are divided into different writing systems, including a cryptographic system known only to initiates although especially in the last period under Greek and Roman rule the hieroglyphic script, called enigmatic because of its mysterious character, enjoyed widespread popularity. Before this, phonetic writing and the interpretive signs had already been abandoned so that a reader,



²⁵ Here we rely on Heinrich Brugsch, *Die Aegyptologie*, Leipzig 1891, *ibid.*, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, Leipzig 1888, as well as Adolf Erman, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Alterthum*, Tübingen 1885.

^{xxviii} This is Figure 13 in Giehlow's translation but 12 in Horapollo.

^{xxix} As Giehlow says, acrophonia is the system whereby the whole word is recognized by the first letter or by the first or last syllable of the word. The contribution of this system to the development of the alphabet was traditionally first recognized by Sir Alan Gardiner in about 1915 but this raises questions since Giehlow wrote this part of his essay in 1901-2.

^{xxx} Tzetzes was a twelfth century Greek scholar from Constantinople, a number of whose works have survived. Chaeremon was a Stoic philosopher living in the middle of the first century CE. The reference to his hieroglyphs is in Tzetzes' scholion to line 1.97 of the Iliad a line which has indeed given trouble to scholars over the ages centered on the word 'hands' which has resulted in differing wording in different manuscripts of the Iliad. The line refers to the plague brought on the Greeks by Apollo but it is not clear whether Apollo will use his hands to ward off the plague or whether the hands refer to the might of the plague itself. In any event, Tzetzes' adoption of this ambiguity to introduce the hieroglyphs does not seem particularly relevant in the context. See also P. W. van der Horst, *Chaeremon: Egyptian priest and Stoic Philosopher*, Leiden: Brill, 1984 which gives the original Greek and an English translation as does E. A. Wallis Budge in *Mummy: A Handbook of Egyptian Funerary Archaeology*, Cambridge University Press, 1894, p. 129 who adds an explanation of how Chaeremon's hieroglyphs could relate to the correct hieroglyphic translations. In this extract Chaeremon give the translations of twenty hieroglyphs much in the style of Horapollo although there are none which coincide directly. Van der Horst believes that there are sufficient similarities with some of the hieroglyphs of Horapollo that he must have used Chaeremon as

who knew only the ideograms was forced to complete their meaning on his own. Later, during the development of the alphabet, signs for letters multiplied while existing ones, such as single letters or syllables, took on new secondary meanings. In short, the script had degenerated into a sort of cabalistic game.

The ancient sources refer to this era as that in which the work of Horapollo originated. Brugsch,²⁶ reports numerous examples from this time of which amongst the most interesting are those from the Horapollo. As Pirckheimer rightly translates, beetle and vulture mean the god Vulcan (Book I, ch. 12),^{xxviii} while the reverse, vulture and beetle, indicates Pallas. The beetle is the sign for the god Ptah with the designation Tan (Vulcan in Egyptian), the vulture on the other hand, is the sign for Nit (Pallas in Egyptian). According to the rule of acrophonia,^{xxix} the beetle is the first letter of the designation that it symbolizes, namely T, while the vulture means N. Just as Egyptian writing normally uses only consonants, Horapollo signifies Hephaestus with the hieroglyph [] T (a) n, while Pallas is expressed as [] N (i) t.

This aspect of Horapollo has not yet been examined in a systematic manner and many of his more obscure or contradictory interpretations continue to be unresolved enigmas. The fact remains that a growing knowledge of the original sources has uncovered a large number of the hieroglyphs which he interpreted, confirming many of his explanations. Thus most of the hieroglyphs that Tzetzes^{xxx} extracted from the διδάγματα τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων [instructions from the sacred scripts] of Chaeremon,²⁷ a stoic-hieroglyphic tutor of the Emperor Nero,^{28,xxxi} closely fit the Horapollo interpretations. But just as this Egyptian priest who fused indigenous theology with Greek philosophy and who saw in the hieroglyphs an allegorical representation of the physical meaning of the gods, the work of lexical-exegetical Horapollo reveals a merely superficial use of the Greek names of the gods and of the verses of Homer and also commentaries which derive from Aristotle and Aelian.²⁹

²⁶ See Brugsch, *Die Aegyptologie* cit., p. 4.

²⁷ See Brugsch, *Die Aegyptologie* cit., p. 4; Lauth, *Horapollon*, in den Sitzungsberichten der kgl. Bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Jahrgang 1876, p. 67. Here there is an extract from the paper by Samuel Birch, translated in the *Révue Archéologique*, VIII Année, Troisième partie (Paris 1851), with the title: fragment of the book of Chaeremon on hieroglyphs, pp. 16 ff.

²⁸ In respect of Chaeremon and the assumptions of Lauth, see E. Zeller, *Die Hieroglyphikèr Chaeremon und Horapollon*, in *Hermes*, XI (1876), p. 431.

²⁹ In this regard see the research cited in Leemans cit.

Assuming, then, that the Alexandrine school inherited both Eastern and Western learning, there is no need to think anything else but that the translator Philip included or added similar passages. Indeed, the author of the Hieroglyphica could be held responsible for the new Alexandrine chronology^{xxxii} and the dogma of the Gnostic schools.

In Book I, Chapter 14 of the Hieroglyphica there is indeed a passage that derives from the Church Fathers, since only they divided the world in seventy-two regions and languages, whereas previously it was customary to distinguish seventy-five such areas.^{30,xxxiii} It seems that this variant reveals a late change of text, probably not due to the translator but to a more recent period, that is when Christianity was no longer in conflict with Egyptian theology. Such a conflict must however be assumed to have existed at the time when the text of Horapollon was translated from the Egyptian. Philip had confidence in the hieratic script in which Horapollon, a sacred scribe and initiate in the meaning of the hieroglyphs, the divine language, had carefully prepared his translation of the hieroglyphs since they did not relate in any way to subjects from daily demotic life. Moreover, it seems that Philip presumed that there still persisted a great interest in hieroglyphics amongst Greek-speaking peoples. But this situation would soon change and new considerations began to dominate since it was then that the Greek-Coptic script replaced both the hieratic as well as the demotic, and the hieroglyphs of the obelisks were discredited as so much devilry.³¹ If Philip had taken these division numbers from the Church Fathers, it would be surprising that in his translation he had not also made use of their content. It suffices just to imagine how much enthusiasm there must have been for the young Christian religion to eliminate the pagan significance of the hieroglyphs. Several sources confirm that during the destruction of the temple of Serapis, hieroglyphs in the shape of the cross were read as signs of the original Apocalypse. Not only that. In the era of the church militant there was even published what can properly be

a source. There is some speculation that the Hieroglyphica of Chaeremon and perhaps that of Horapollon was based on an even earlier work *περί τῶν ἐν Μερὸς ἱερῶν γραμμάτων*, On the sacred letters of Meroë, which is now lost. Meroë was the capital of Nubia, the ancient country which was the southern neighbor of Egypt. The Nubians used a script which shared some of the same hieroglyphs as the Egyptians but their language has never been deciphered. See also below ch. 2, nt. 5.

^{xxxii} The article in nt. 28 above discusses whether Chaeremon the Stoic philosopher was the same individual as Chaeremon the "hierogrammatist" or sacred scribe. There are also two Egyptians known by the name of Horapollon. One was a priest from the time of the Emperor Zeno (AD 474–491) who later converted to Christianity. The other referred to in the Suda was a grammarian from Phanebytis, under Theodosius II (AD 408–450). It is believed that it was this latter who wrote the *Hieroglyphica*.

^{xxxiii} Presumably Giehlow is referring here to the adoption of the Byzantine Calendar by the Eastern Orthodox Church at the end of the seventh century. This was in use for 1,000 years and only changed to the Julian calendar at different dates in different countries during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

^{xxxiii} The count of seventy (or seventy-two) nations originates with Genesis, Chapter 10 which enumerates the seventy grandchildren of Noah. Verse 32 relates that "by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood" (Authorized Version). The precise count is however open to dispute and Augustine also gives seventy-two as the correct number (*De Civitate Dei*, bk. XVI, ch. 9). For the universal significance of both the number seventy and seventy-two see Timothy Scott "Remarks on the universal symbolism of the number 72" at <http://timothy-scott.com/72/>

³⁰ Leemans cit., p. 198. A claim of 72 countries can be found in *Epifanios contra Haereses*, bk. I, vol. I sec. 6, p. 6. The number was related to the doctrine of angels. See Leemans cit.

³¹ See the letter of Julian the Apostate to the Alexandrians on the return of an obelisk that stood in Alexandria printed in I. A. Muratori, *Anecdota graeca*, Patavii 1709 p. 326) and J. A. Fabricius *Bibliotheca Graeca*, vol. VII, p. 84. For such a suggestion see the exposition of Zoega cit.

³² See Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, ed. Rufinus Aquileiensis, vol. II, bk. XI, chap. XXIX, Romae 1741; Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiasticae Historiae*, ed. Robert Hussey, Oxon, 1853, vol. II, bk. V, ch. XVII, p. 608.

thyscott.com.au/Assets/pdfs/Seventy-two.pdf (10/17/2012). Horapollon I.14 has the number seventy-two.

^{xxxiv} The *Physiologus* was one of the most widely circulated books of the early Middle Ages and is said to have been translated into every language in Europe including Ethiopian and Icelandic. It was supplanted in the late Middle Ages by the *Bestiary*. See Francesco Sbordone *Physiologus* Rome: Albrighi, 1936 and T. H. White *The Book of Beasts* Cape, 1954 for a discussion. The *editio princeps* of the *Physiologus* is dated 1587 published in Rome by Zanetti in a version also by Epiphanius.

^{xxxv} Only twenty of Chaeremon's hieroglyphic translations have survived (see nt. xxx above) and many of these do have references to their true meanings as presently understood particularly in denoting the relevant determinative. This may be what Giehl refers to as the "phonetic theory".

called a handbook, the famous *Physiologus*,^{32,xxxiv} which originated in Alexandria in the late second century and in which hieroglyphs, seen as symbols of future salvation, were deliberately interpreted as a kind of novel doctrine which tried to characterize them by using new natural images. This work was circulated with unprecedented speed thanks to its didactic approach. Initially, it was intended as a replacement of hieroglyphic symbols for novitiates although in the Middle Ages, albeit in a different form, it became merely a popular history.³³ For a translator of Horapollon, who knew the number symbolism of the new religion, it would therefore have been logical to put other Christian ideas into the *Hieroglyphica*. But of this there is no sign, and there is not even a trace of Gnostic ideas! For this reason, I assume that the number seventy-two was introduced later in the process of transcription.

My assumption is then that Horapollon composed the *Hieroglyphica* within the cultural environment of Gnosticism, probably at the end of the second century, and not, as was previously thought, in the fourth century. That he is surprisingly silent on the phonetic theory of hieroglyphs can be explained by the fact that these symbols represent a particular level, or indeed the highest level, of hieroglyphic studies. Chaeremon, for example, in his *Didagmata*, uses these last exclusively.^{xxxv} It is not impossible therefore that the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollon may have comprised a manual of enigmatic hieroglyphs which concentrated on the natural philosophy of the time.³⁴ Confirmation of such a hypothesis awaits a specialist in natural philosophy.

Nevertheless such a specialist might still be expected to continue to be ignorant as to both the author and the translator and at present all that can definitely be stated follows directly from the title, that is to say that Horapollon had the nickname Nilous and the translator's name was Philip. Of this latter however all the sources are silent. Two people with the name of Horapollon are given by Suidas, the first of whom, coming from Phanebytis in Egypt, lived under Theodosius (fourth century AD), while

³³ See M. Goldstaub - R. Wendrin, *Ein Tosco-Venezianischer Bestiarius*, Halle 1892, p. 5, nts. 2-3; also F. Lauchert, *Die Geschichte des Physiologus*, Strassburg, 1884, where only the positive aspect of the *Physiologus* is emphasized, namely its tendency to reinforce the new dogma.

³⁴ The famous passage of Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata*, V) describes how the priests [hierogrammaten] would first learn the hieratic script and then the hieroglyphic. This was then divided into letters and symbols which in turn were separated into tropes and enigmas (κατὰ τινὰς αἰνιγμάτων). See the edition of Potter (Oxford 1755) II, p. 687.

the other, also Egyptian, was active under Zeno (Fifth century CE). In the first place, one can contrast the different places of birth³⁵ and, acknowledging that Νεῖλωος or Νεῖλαιος must be the Egyptian form, it may be added that the Hieroglyphica is not amongst the works listed by Suidas. Secondly there is the rather late time when Eusebius (between the Third and Fourth centuries CE) stated that in practice the whole of Egypt was Christian ["dem Herrn diene"].^{36,xxxvi} From this evidence it is hard to believe that a century later a pagan treatise such as the Horapollon would still arouse the interest of Christian Greeks. As a layman and reverting to the hypothesis already advanced, I wish, therefore, to revive an idea that recently has been little considered: if the *Hieroglyphica* really served as a manual it would have had the same fate as the *Physiologus*, which, although originally anonymous, eventually was ascribed the name of the most famous Church father.³⁷ Thus, some grateful reader must have christened the anonymous papyrus scroll which had been passed down from hand to hand with the name of a sacred scribe and the name Horapollon, composed of Horus and Apollo, in fact satisfactorily alludes to the divine origins of the author just as the Hermetic writings were attributed to Hermes Trismegistus.^{xxxvii}

Based on the results of modern Egyptology, the humanists would therefore not be entirely wrong when they supposed that the hieroglyphs transmitted by Horapollon and other authors were a secret and enigmatic text intermixed with Egyptian and Greek mysteries. The wish to understand the hieroglyphs and their universal meanings with the help of these mysteries was a false hope which would certainly have persisted if the Rosetta stone with its inscription in three languages had not been found^{xxxviii} and if these had not been immediately deciphered. As a result of this discovery therefore Egyptian antiquity with its "sacred dawn" was reconstructed and could be understood without difficulty. The shrewdest commentator was Zoega, who, through his work to establish a model to assess the work of the humanists, showed how the traditions of the ancients had been treated before Champollion.³⁸

³⁵ See G. F. Parthey, *Horapollon von dem Hieroglyphen*, in *Monatsberichte der königlichen preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, XVI (1871), p. 111, where Nilous is interpreted as coming from the city of Nilus or Nilupolis in the Heptomenis region of Egypt.

³⁶ Eusebius of Caesarea *De evangelica praeparatione* cit., bk. III, ch. II.

³⁷ See Lauchert cit., p. 66.

³⁸ See Zoega cit.

^{xxxvi} In this chapter Eusebius introduces a passage of Diodorus on the philosophy of the Egyptians. He does not say that Egypt has become Christian.

^{xxxvii} The Corpus Hermeticum are those texts which were supposedly the work of the Greek-Egyptian syncretic god Hermes-Thoth and which had a continuing influence on Renaissance mystical and symbolic thought. Introduced to the West in 1460 they were first translated at the instigation of Cosimo de Medici by Marsilio Ficino. See the critical edition by A. J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, Paris: Gabalda, 1950-54, F. A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, Chicago University Press, 1954 and Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. Other bibliographic references are given in Curran, 2007, p. 298 nts.73 and 74.

^{xxxviii} The Rosetta stone was found in 1799 by an officer in the army of Napoleon on the West Bank of the Nile. In 1801 it was handed over to the British on the surrender of the French army and remains in the British Museum. See Parkinson cit. p. 26.

^{xxxix} Kircher's translation is "the four-powered beneficial guardian of celestial generation, dominator of air, through Mophtha commits benign aerial humor to Ammon most powerful of inferiors, so that by images and fitting ceremonies it is potently expressed". In fact it says that the Emperor Domitian ordered the obelisk and had the inscription cut in Rome!

^{xxxx} Celio Calcagnini (1479-1541) was a natural scientist and literary scholar from Ferrara.

^{xxxxi} Each Book of Valeriano's work has a short dedicatory introduction to a different individual. It is believed that the whole work, published in 1556 shortly before his death, was written over a long period beginning before the sack of Rome in 1527. See below Chapter 6.

To judge correctly the research of the humanists into the study of hieroglyphics, that is in representing the first stage of Egyptology, we must dwell briefly on the errors that later permeated this discipline. Here we limit ourselves to remembering the deeds of charitable Mophtha that the learned Anathasius Kircher^{39,xxxix} deciphered in a royal cartouche on the obelisk in Piazza Navona. These tentative interpretations in effect discredited the study of hieroglyphs. Indeed, without mincing his words, Winckelmann called such attempts "a way of making fools of themselves".⁴⁰ From this it is certainly understandable why the practitioners of modern Egyptology, which is based on entirely different grounds, believed these attempts were suspicious juvenilia, and why the humanist Pierio Valeriano,⁴¹ although his work *Hieroglyphica* was based on ancient research, should be considered the first who tried to interpret hieroglyphs.

This general distrust of old Egyptology also explains why the writings of Valeriano were not taken into consideration in many of the humanist texts. Both Georg Voigt⁴² and Jacob Burckhardt,⁴³ in fact, ignore this branch of revived antiquity. Only Gregorovius⁴⁴ says that from this time on, an examination of the Orient began to be included in the research of the natural scientists and, he mentions the Ferrarese, Celio Calcagnini,^{xxxx} in addition to Valeriano. He describes the work of this latter as a noteworthy attempt to explain the symbols of Egypt and of the ancient world. But whether Gregorovius could have read beyond the introduction of Valeriano's work, is doubtful. His exposition does not make use of any of the numerous and interesting insights that this latter gives us in the individual dedications about the relationship between scholars in Roman and Venetian circles.^{xxxxi}

³⁹ Kircher, *Obeliscus Pamphilicus*, Romae 1650, pp. 557-559; in relation to this see Erman cit, p. 12.

⁴⁰ J. Winckelmann, *Werke*, vol. II: *Versuch einer Allegorie, Besonders für die Kunst*, edition of Hoffman'schen Verlagenstatt, Stuttgart 1847, p. 241.

⁴¹ See Brugsch, *Die Aegyptologie* cit., p. 2.

⁴² G. Voigt, *Die Wiederbelebung des classischen Alterthums*, vol. II, Berlin 1880-1881, vol. I, p. 277, referring to Ciriaco d'Ancona, who had copies made of hieroglyphs in Egypt and had them sent to Florence, writes: "Who before him ever had the idea that the ancient world of the pharaohs even had to be investigated scientifically?" This is the only reference; the others were added in the second edition.

⁴³ Jakob Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien, ein Versuch*, Leipzig 1899, vol. I, p. 217 refers to Gregorovius in a note.

⁴⁴ Ferdinand Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter, vom V. bis zum XVI. Jahrhundert*, vol VIII, Stuttgart 1896, pp. 316 ff.

The fortuitous discovery of the Horapollo translated by Pirckheimer and illustrated by Dürer therefore demonstrates a trend that seems to have influenced the artistic development of humanism in the same way that the entire Roman cultural universe was influenced by the conquest of Egypt. Certainly, this rebirth of ancient Egypt did not give rise to new cults, nor did it stimulate the construction of temples of Isis but on the other hand, its particular artistic sensibility had an indelible effect. "If the Egyptian conception of art was not valued for itself but only as a means to illustrate mystical words and thoughts; if, furthermore, a work of art should not be thought of as an expression of the living spirit of its creator, but rather should serve to promote the thought behind it that had transformed the image into a dead graphic sign or into a hieroglyphic word,"⁴⁵ then some of these fundamental aspects of that culture can already be found in Italian art of the fifteenth century. The scholar Friedländer, for example,⁴⁶ in his discussion of the figurative ornamentation of medals points out the passion for these captious allegories, justifying such aberrations as due to the enthusiasm of the fifteenth century for the variety of antiquity and that these allegories were in effect the first stirrings of humanism. Apart from knowledge of the Greek conception of artistic freedom, the Renaissance also took from antiquity the ancient Egyptian belief in artistic restraint and the interplay between these two concepts found resolution only in contemporary artists of genius.

It would be presumptuous to try to outline in an exhaustive manner the influence of the humanistic study of hieroglyphs on Renaissance art. There is in my case not only a lack of time and capacity but also the necessary expertise. Only the research of a specialized philologist could clarify the origin of the manuscripts of Horapollo and the penetration and diffusion of the texts of classical authors on hieroglyphics. Above all it would need the experience of a professional archaeologist to establish what was known of Egyptian antiquity by the humanists when the study of hieroglyphics began and as it developed. Moreover it should be investigated whether such literary symbols could in fact have been created independently of the Renaissance. All of this could only be reconstructed by detailed research that could refer the contents of emblematic

⁴⁵ Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie* cit., pp. 78 ff.

⁴⁶ Ferdinand Gregorovius cit., pp. 316 ff.

works of art back to their Egyptian sources. With regard to this research I will limit myself to giving the general outline of the dynamics of the Egyptian Renaissance and examining some of its finest monuments. Within this cultural movement it seems to me that a salutary reference point always to bear in mind is the role of the Triumphal Arch of Maximilian I. If at the end of my attempts I have managed to lay the foundations for the history of allegory of the Renaissance, then I can be satisfied I have achieved the goal that I aimed for.

☪ THE HIEROGLYPHS OF THE ITALIAN HUMANISTS

☪ *Hieroglyphs in the tradition of the Middle Ages*

“Ego Christophorus presbyter de Buondelmont de Florentia hunc emi librum apud Andron Insulam maris Aegei MCCCCXIX mensis Junii” [I Christopher, priest of Buondelmonti from Florence bought this book in the island of Andros in the Aegean sea in June 1419]: this is the note that can be read in a paper manuscript of the fourteenth century preserved in the Laurentian Library in Florence which contains the *Life of Apollonius* by Philostratus of Tyana, the *Physical Elements* of Proclus, and finally the two books of the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollon.¹ We can therefore ascribe to June 1419 the same importance for modern Egyptology as August 1799 when, in the valley of the Nile, French archaeologists discovered the Rosetta Stone, a piece of basalt with the inscription in three languages which honors Ptolemy Epiphanus.² In fact, just as modern research derived from this fragment the key to deciphering hieroglyphs, and thus acquired the means to develop a new science, so in the hands of the humanists that piece of Egyptian priestly wisdom, which Buondelmonti had by chance acquired, became the starting point for knowledge of hieroglyphics before Champollion. Thus, regardless of the odd interpretations that

¹ The Horapollon begins on fol. 68^r of Plut. 69, cod.27. The rubrics of each chapter in the manuscript have faded thus leaving a gap in the line which identifies the start of the text of the chapter.

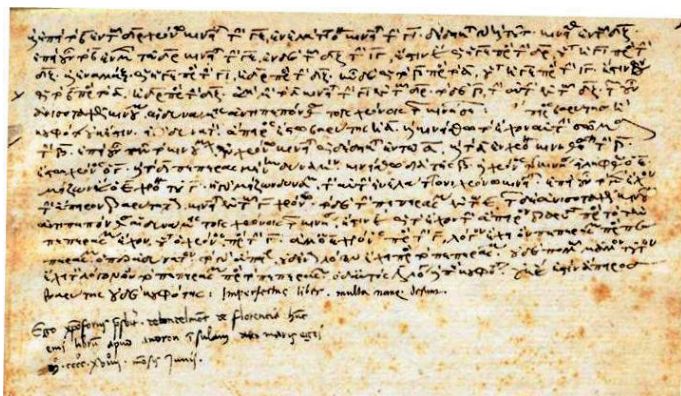


Fig. 6 A page from the manuscript Plut. 69.27 of the Horapollon from 1419 showing the signature of Buondelmonti

¹ A. M. Bandini, *Catalogus codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae*, Florence 1774-1778, vol. II, p. 645, Plutei. 69, cod. 27 see Leemans cit., p. XXV.

² See Erman cit., p. 13.

developed over the centuries, it imposed on scholars the conviction that it would be useless to try to read the hieroglyphs as an ideographic script. But since this belief liberated knowledge of the field, accelerating its development and freeing it from the weight of tradition, it can be said that 1419 was the symbolic origin of the development of Egyptology.

Of course, for the historian of humanistic studies it is very depressing to realize how long it took for all the false views on hieroglyphs to be refuted. But it would be unfair to expect of the humanists such enlightened awareness especially when it is remembered that some of them had stressed from the outset the futility of the path taken by scholars in the study of hieroglyphics. We know that this era was the dawn of modern science, and therefore it deserves an attitude neither of complacency nor of irony, especially when you consider that the young spirit of humanism revived a connection with the immense patrimony of antiquity from almost all points of view. Indeed, as the dependence of Roman authors on the Greeks had pushed scholars to study Hellenistic literature, so an even greater admiration for the Egyptians urged them to draw directly on the original sources of this knowledge. The fact that the humanists immediately understood the importance of hieroglyphs and tried several times to decipher them without giving up in the face of continuous failure, reveals the peculiar depth of their scientific ambition and their strong academic drive. These attempts, sometimes naive and with little critical sense, nevertheless reveal a vitality, strength and energy that contrasts admirably with the lack of interest typical of past eras.

We know that Byzantine scholarship had mastered the Greek language perfectly. But what had scholarship produced in the field?ⁱⁱ Although its history is still not entirely clear we assume, knowing its particular spiritual rigidity, that hieroglyphs were not the subject of research after G. Tzetzes unless they were used to comment on Homer.³ And

ⁱⁱ This scornful question echoes the similar sentiment of Gibbon that in the Eastern Roman Empire: "In the revolution of ten centuries, not a single discovery was made to exalt the dignity or enhance the happiness of mankind". Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, London: Folio, (1983), vol. VII, p. 117.

³ S. Birch, *Fragments du livre de Chaérémon sur les hiéroglyphes*, trans. from the English by Ch. Lenormant in *Révue Archéologique*, VIII (1851), pp. 13 ff., partially reproduced in Lauth cit. Chaeremon says that Homer should be ποιδευθεὶς ἀκριβῶς δὲ πᾶσαν μάθησιν ἐκ συμβαλικῶν Αἰθιοπικῶν γραμμάτων [Homer says that he was accurately instructed by means of the symbolic Ethiopian characters]. In this regard, we address below knowledge of hieroglyphics in Florence in the late fifteenth century. Tzetzes lived in Byzantium in the twelfth century AD, and it was the Empress Irene, the daughter of a German prince and wife of Manuel Comnenus, that promoted his work on Homer. In fact, the Empress loved the Greek author. See the *Biographie Générale* on Tzetzes and also ch. 1 nt. xxx above.

therefore while the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollon was copied at the end of the fourteenth century, the period from which the surviving manuscripts originated,^{iii,4} this work was probably carried out more for the purpose of an “educational exercise” than for increasing its understanding. Even assuming that someone had intentionally inserted this manuscript of the work of Horapollon next to the textbooks of physics, of natural philosophy and of astronomy, there is no evidence that the manuscript had not been copied from an archetype which dates back several centuries earlier. Moreover, it would be equally difficult to show that the Platonist Gemisto Plethon,^{iv} who was influential in the West, had, following the example of his master, exploited any definite knowledge

⁴As well as the Medicean manuscript there are also relevant manuscripts from the XIV century: Vatican no. 871, Paris. no. 192 and Munich no. 419 (formerly in Augsburg). Regarding this last see I. Hardt, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum Graecorum Bibliothecae regiae bavaricae*, vol. IV, Munich, 1810, and D. Hoeschele, *Catalogus Graecorum codicum qui sunt in Bibliotheca Augustana*, Augsburg 1595; with regard to its possible source, see G. C. Mezger, *Geschichte der vereinte Kreis- und königlichen Stadtbibliothek in Augsburg*, Augsburg, 1842, p. 6. In 1543, the chargé d'affaires of the city, Philipp Walter, bought from Antonius Eparchus, the exiled bishop of Corfu, some Greek manuscripts for 800 ducats. In 1562, the famous philologist Hieronymus Wolf cataloged them and rebound them as can be deduced from the information on the binding of the manuscript of the Horapollon. On the clasp on the binding, above an ornament which could be a pinecone, a symbol of Augsburg, are the letters W. P. It is useless to speculate that a manuscript of the library of Willibald Pirckheimer of Nuremberg could have ended up in Augsburg, and that the ornament corresponds to the birchtree of Pirckheimer, because at that time the assets of the latter were still entirely in the hands of his heirs. Also there is no indication of the whereabouts of Peutingers library, since no heir ever had a name beginning with W before the year 1562, in view of the fact that up to this date nothing from his library had been sold. It seems therefore that the Munich manuscript comes from the library of the bishop of Corfu.

In the Vatican manuscript the text of Horapollon is preceded by a Harpocratian; see Leemans cit., p. XXVI. The *scriptores* of the Vatican Library, Don Giovanni Mercati and Pio Franchi de' Cavalleri, confirm that the manuscripts date from the fifteenth century as I was kindly informed by Dr. Pogatscher. However, the manuscript reveals nothing with respect to its origin.

The Paris manuscript no. 192, a “*farrago consarcinatarum rerum*” was first owned by “*τῶν κατηχουμένων* Laurae St. Athanasia” on Mount Athos, after which it went to the library of the chancellor of France, Petrus Séguier (May 28, 1588 - February 1672), and later to the Coislin library; see Montfaucon, *Bibliotheca Coisliniana*, Paris 1715, p. 244, and Léopold Delisle, *Le Cabinet des Manuscrits Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris 1824 vol. II: *Les Manuscrits de Séguier*, p. 78. For the greater part, this manuscript contains ecclesiastical authorities and some mathematical texts. See the list below in the section on the study of hieroglyphics of Niccolò and then of Marsilio Ficino.

ⁱⁱⁱ In Note 4 Giehlow describes three surviving fourteenth century manuscripts of the Horapollon together with what is assumed to be the Buondelmonti's original since it has at the foot his inscription given in the first paragraph of this chapter (Plut. 69. 27 in the Laurentian Library from the fourteenth century). In note 24 he discusses the possible ownership of these manuscripts and in note 41 he gives details of the relevant sixteenth century manuscripts. Leeman's list does not exactly coincide with Giehlow's so see note 41 for further discussion. Sbordone has the most complete list describing twelve Greek manuscripts but he omits two which are given by Giehlow (nos. 7 and 8 in note 73 below). However Buondelmonti's ms. Plut. 69. 27 is now lacking two whole folios in the midst of the Horapollon, for instance that between fol. 69 and 70 so that chapters I, 28-50 of the Horapollon are missing. See also Leemans cit. Leemans believes that Bessarion's ms. Marciana 391 was the one used by Aldus for his 1505 edition. However if Bessarion obtained his from the Medici and this was originally Filelfo's copy (see note 24 below) who had it copied from Buondelmonti's there is the same problem of the missing folios depending on when they were lost. The Harpocratian referred to by Giehlow in note 4 was a work by a second century CE Alexandrian orator Paris no. 192 is now Coislin 192 in the BNF and the Horapollon is found from ff. 121-144. See also Denis L. Drysdall “A note on the Relationship of the Latin and Vernacular Translations of the Horapollon from Fasanin to Caussin,” *Emblematica* 4, 2, (1989) p. 225.

^{iv} Plethon was a member of the Greek delegation who attended the Council of Florence in 1439. At the time in his eighties he had the reputation of being the most learned man in Constantinople. It is said that it was Plethon's lectures on Plato in Florence that subsequently inspired Cosimo de Medici to found the Platonic Academy directed by Marsilio Ficino.

of the hieroglyphs for their mystical teaching.⁵ It can be rightly argued that the humanists had not inherited any Byzantine ambitions, but rather that it was their thirst for knowledge that persuaded contemporaries to pierce the veil of mystery surrounding the discovery of Buondelmonti.

The Middle Ages had inherited part of the deep and superstitious veneration that had been devoted to Egyptian culture during the era of the Roman Empire and this was not forgotten when the natural sciences were given new life. Certainly, the medieval reader of the lives of Joseph and Moses taken from the Old Testament would have identified Egypt as the home of black magic, witchcraft, astrology and the interpretation of dreams. But the texts of the Church Fathers had introduced different elements and the numerous classical references made by medieval encyclopedists prove that Egypt had never ceased to be valued as the birthplace of science. Furthermore, Roman authors, read and re-read during the Middle Ages, provided sufficient references to Egyptian learning to instill a respect in medieval scholars for such wisdom.

Certainly there were favorite authors such as Pliny, Lucan, Apuleius, and Josephus, the latter very quickly translated into Latin, all of whom gave an in-depth analysis of the arts and sciences in Egypt. The main source for understanding the monuments and their construction, their material constitution and their function was primarily Pliny, who reported in detail how Augustus had had moved two obelisks to the Circus Maximus and to the Champ de Mars, and how the Vatican obelisk had been erected. Pliny described the images inscribed on the first two monuments as a text in which Egyptian philosophy had embodied its interpretation of the nature of things.⁶ Macrobius in the *Saturnalia* explicitly called such text

⁵ Manuscript no. 2832 of the National Library in Paris (see Catal. Cod. MSS. Reg. Paris., vol. II, p. 558, and H. Omont, *Inventaire sommaire des Manuscrits Grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, vol. III, Paris 1888, p. 47) contains manuscripts of the XIV, XV and XVI century, among which is also *Plethonis Chaldaicarum Expositiones*. The manuscript of Horapollon, included in this manuscript, is written in a hand of the sixteenth century, see Leemans cit., p. XXVII. For what concerns Gemisto Plethon see Alexandre, *Πλήθωνος νόμων συγγραφῆς τὰ σωζόμενα* Paris, 1853. More clues to his possible knowledge of and use of hieroglyphics are not available.

⁶ According to Pliny's, *Historia Naturalis*, bk. XXXVI, 8-9, ed. Detlefsen (Berlin 1872), p. 166: "[...] obeliscus in circo magno. . . is vero . . . in campo Martio. . . , inscripti ambo rerum naturae interpretationem Aegyptiorum philosophia continent." According to Pliny, the obelisk of the Circus Maximus was erected in Egypt during the period in which Pythagoras had stayed there. The Vatican obelisk has no hieroglyphs.

“hieroglyphic”, and he also offers some examples: the sign of the ox means the land, the scepter with the eye of Osiris, the sun, the statue which shows a head shaven down the middle indicates the passing of the day.⁷ In the *Pharsalia* of Lucan⁸ is found the following hexameters, which clarifies the origin of the Egyptian text and its relationship to the Phoenix:

Phoenices primi, famae si creditur, ausi
 Mansuram rudibus vocem signare figuris.
 Nondum flumineas Memphis contexere biblos
 Noverat, et saxis tantum volucresque feraeque
 Sculptaque servabant magicas animalia linguas.

[Phoenicians first (if story be believed)
 Dared to record in characters; for yet
 Papyrus was not fashioned, and the priests
 Of Memphis, carving symbols upon walls
 Of mystic sense (in shape of beast or fowl)
 Preserved the secrets of their magic art.

Trans. Edward Ridley, Perseus Project]

These verses have been cited frequently, first of all by Isidore of Seville in his great collection of etymologies, in which we are told about the Egyptians, about the texts of the priests and people and even about the function of the pyramids and obelisks, although these reports, coming partly from Herodotus, often appear misinterpreted.⁹ Moreover

⁷ Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, ed. Franciscus Eyssenhardt (Leipzig 1893) bk. I, XIX: “(Caelum) videtur terram desuper observare, quam Aegyptii hieroglyphicis litteris cum significare volunt, ponunt bovis figuram”, and XXI: “Hunc Osirin, ut solem esse asserunt, quotiens hieroglyphicis litteris suis exprimere volunt, insculpunt sceptrum inque eo speciem oculi exprimunt . . . Idem Aegyptii volentes ipsius solis nomine dicere simulacrum, figuravere raso capite, sed dextra parte crine remanente”. The *editio princeps* appeared in 1472 from the press of Nicolaus Jenson in Venice.

⁸ Marci Annaei Lucani, *Pharsalia* ed. Weber (Lipsiae 1828). The *editio princeps* was published in Venice in 1477 and was then republished several times. There exist a large number of manuscripts of the work.

⁹ Isidore of Seville, *Opera omnia*, (Paris 1601), bk. I, pp. 1 ff. “Aegyptiorum litteras Ysis regina Inachi filia de Graecia veniens in Aegyptum reperit et Aegyptiis tradidit. Apud Aegyptios autem alias habuisse literas sacerdotes dicunt, alias vulgus; sacerdotales *ἱεράς*, vulgares *πανδημούς*. Graecarum literarum usum primi Phoenices invenerunt, unde et Lucanus etc. . . .” As for the pyramids as tombs, see bk. XV. In bk. III, p. 40, the etymology of “Piramis” comes from the Greek *πῦρ* since “in modum ignis ab amplo in acumen consurgit”. About obelisks see bk. XVIII p. 250; on the “mercurius canino capite” see bk. III, p. 111, etc., etc.

^v See *The City of God* 18.18.2 which is apparently the first characterization of the *Metamorphoses* as the Golden Ass.

^{vi} Asclepius III does indeed contain a dire prophecy of the future of Egypt where the gods will withdraw, the land will be filled with funerals and corpses, and the Nile will be swollen with torrents of blood and filled with gore.

^{vii} Several works of Rufinus Tyrannius (c. 340-410) survive including the *Expositio Symboli*; dated 1468 this is said to be the first book printed in Oxford although this date has been questioned.

^{viii} Manetho was a priest of Serapis from the early third century BCE. The most important of his writings was the *Aegyptica* or History of Egypt. It can be read in *Manetho* ed. and trans. by W. G. Waddell, Harvard University Press (Loeb), 1940 who demonstrates the difficulty in identifying what remains of the original text and the extent to which it was embellished by Josephus. See also John Dillery 'The First Egyptian Narrative History: Manetho and Greek Historiography', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphie* 127 (1999) pp. 93-116 who emphasizes that "its importance cannot be overstressed: two cultures and the narrative systems they employed, were brought together in the composition of his *Aegyptiaca*".

later, even Augustine¹⁰ refers to the work of Apuleius describing it as the Golden Ass.^v Such praise is not limited to the *Metamorphoses*, in which the rites of the Egyptians are described in mystical form and which also includes the alleged translation of the dialogue *De divina voluntate* between Hermes Trismegistus and his student Asclepius, at one time attributed to Apuleius. In this there is foretold a dark destiny: from the religion of the Egyptians there would only survive fables and even these would be thought fantastic by their descendants, while of pious deeds the only witness would be words carved in stone.^{vi} The work was originally written in Greek, the fusion of a conflict existing in Alexandria in Egypt between Greek, Hebrew and Egyptian traditions. Along with related hermetic texts with their magical and mystical embellishments, it contributed in no small way to keeping alive a reverent respect for the wisdom of Egypt. Moreover, even though the characters of these dialogues are imaginary, the biting polemic of Josephus is directed against the historians of ancient Egypt. It seems that Cassiodorus had ordered Rufinus^{vii} to translate the books of Josephus *Against Apion*, and these still give us the most exhaustive information on Manetho^{viii} and Chaeremon.¹¹ Rufinus and Cassiodorus are the authors who related the discovery of the crosses on the walls of the temple of Serapis and they interpreted these as hieroglyphic signs of future salvation.¹² However, it proved to be an opportunity to aid the reader towards an understanding of the beliefs of these authors; the canonical manual of the trivium and the quadrivium of Martianus Capella's *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* in fact introduced philology as part of the seven liberal arts and related it to its partial Egyptian origin. Here we read that Egyptian wisdom is secular and that books existed in a script, composed of images of animals, which served as a

¹⁰ See below for the discussion of the comments on Apuleius by Filippo Beroaldo the Elder.

¹¹ Flavius Josephus, *Opera*, ed. B. Niese, vol. 1, Berlin, p. XXVII, where there are notes on the many manuscripts in Latin translations. The Latin translation of *Antiquitates Iudaicae* was published in 1470 in Augsburg. At that time, Josephus was considered the second Livy.

¹² Rufinus Tyrannius, *Historiae Ecclesiasticae* bk. XI, ch. XXIX, as an addition to Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia Ecclesiastica* cit., p. III, and Cassiodorus, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 1 *Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, Rotomagi 1679, p. 392. Rufinus writes: "signum hoc nostrum Dominicae crucis inter illas, quas dicunt ἱερατικᾶς id est sacerdotales litteras habere Aegypti dicuntur. Cuius litterae seu vocabuli hanc asserunt interpretationem: vita ventura".

model for the stone carvings in Egyptian temples.¹³

These examples, which can easily be multiplied, are sufficient to establish that in the Middle Ages there were not lacking sources that threw light on the role of the obelisks and their unusual signs. But despite the assertions of Pliny, even in papal bulls the Vatican obelisk was interpreted as a monument erected to Caesar, and similarly, the monolith of the Campidoglio was believed to be a tombstone carved for Octavian. The term obelisk had become outdated, and was often replaced with the word spire or “julia”, or mistaken for “pyramis”.^{14,ix} Indeed, as regards the function of the pyramids, about which the pilgrims who had traveled to the Holy Sepulchre had certainly remarked, then one may assume that, despite what was said in Isidore’s encyclopedia, these were considered to be the granaries of Joseph. What’s more, a picture in a mosaic in San Marco in Venice contributed to confirm a mindset still fixed in this biblical slant. Characteristic of this is the expedient devised by Gregory Nazanzius, who had tried to reconcile the traditions of the Old Testament with the information contained in Herodotus. He assumed that the pyramids had been built as granaries and that only after the Exodus had they been transformed into tombs.¹⁵ Thus the works cited above served no purpose other than to strengthen respect for this profound Egyptian wisdom, with the result that no one felt compelled to collect passages in classical authors concerning

¹³ Martianus Capella, *Satyricon* ed. Hug. Grotius, Lugd. Bat. 1559, bk. II, p. 25: “Erantque quidem (libri) sacra nigredine colorati, quorum litterae animantium credebantur effigiis, quasque librorum notas Athanasia conspiciens quibusdam eminentibus saxis iussit ascribi atque intra specum per Aegyptiorum adyta collocari” In addition, see bk. VIII, p. 274 where astronomy is expounded in the following words: “per immensa spatia saecularum, ne profana loquacitate vulgarer, Aegyptiorum clausa adytis occultabar etc”.

¹⁴ H. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom im Alterthum*, vol. II, Berlin 1871, p. 182. Bull. of Leo X, “agulia, quae vocatur sepulcrum Julii Caesaris” an interpretation derived from the inscription on the plinth: “divo Caesari”. See also pp. 421 ff. The description of Nicolaus Muffel, who in 1452 had brought insignia for the Emperor Frederick from Nuremberg to Rome III, according to which in front of that same church (“unser Frawen Minerfa”) at the Campidoglio there was found a spire on top of a golden base, where Octavian was buried, see Michaelis, ‘Le Antichità della città di Roma descritte da Nicolao Muffel’, *Bullettino dell’ Imperiale Istituto Archaeologico Germanico* III (1888), pp. 254-276. About the name of the obelisks as “agulie” and “pyramides”, see Jordan cit.

¹⁵ Gregorius Nazianzenus, *Eliae Cretensis Commentaria Orat.* XX and Stephanus Byzantius, *De urbibus*. This last gives the etymology already quoted ἀπὸ τῶν πυρῶν namely ‘of grain’, see Pierius Valerianus Bolzanius, *Hieroglyphica*, (Basel 1556), fol. 261^v.

ix For modern studies on the obelisks see Cesare D’Onofrio *Gli Obeliscchi di Roma* Rome: Bulzoni, 1967 and Erik Iversen ‘Obelisks in Exile’, *The Obelisks of Rome*. vol 1 Copenhagen: Gad 1968-1972. See also Michele Mercati *Di gli Obeliscchi di Roma* Cappelli, 1589 which Giehlow refers to on ch.7 nt. 22 below. The word “agulia” is given in the *Mirabilia Romae* (14) when describing the obelisk of Julius Caesar, “quod est memoria Caesaris, id est agulia, . . .” [that is in memory of Caesar, that is an agulia]. Agulia in this passage looks very much like a scribal error meaning “that is to Julius (Caesar)”

the tradition nor to examine critically all the commentaries nor to attempt to relate these latter to the monuments which had been preserved. Research of this kind, free from preconceptions, has to be traced back to the Italian humanists, especially the circle of scholars in Florence.

☛ *The Horapollo and hieroglyphic studies in Florence*

The *Hieroglyphica*, purchased by Cristoforo de Buondelmonti, was brought to Florence and later was placed in the Medicean library. This gives the Florentine manuscript a sort of primacy and privilege compared to other manuscripts brought to Italy in the fifteenth century and placed in the Vatican Library. In fact in Rome, especially at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the favorable conditions were still lacking which in Florence allowed scientific importance to the discovery of Buondelmonti. Despite this, we doubt that the fortunate buyer of the manuscript would have understood the full value of this work, even at the time of his purchase. Buondelmonti, who only later changed from being a merchant to a priest,¹⁶ had stayed in Greece and the islands between the years 1414 to 1422 long enough as a “scholar of Greek science” to be able to read his purchase fluently. Furthermore, he was sufficiently learned to realize that the books of Horapollo were a rich source of research, though it seems that he never considered the idea of linking these hieroglyphs with the inscriptions on the obelisks, since in his book on the Greek islands, which he sent in 1422 from Rhodes to Rome to Cardinal Giordano Orsini,^x he describes the obelisk in Constantinople which was then located on the piazza of the Hippodrome with the popular term “*agulia*.” This detailed report also cites the hexameter carved in the base of the monolith, but does not mention its hieroglyphic decoration. Three years later, Ciriaco de’ Pizzicolti,^{xi} although he was more of an amateur than a scholar, took the opposite approach and did note the strange carvings, which, recalling the passage in Lucan, he called Phoenician characters. But he understood nothing of the meaning of the hieroglyphs.¹⁷

^x Cardinal Orsini was the most prominent member of the Orsini family in the early fifteenth century, a patron of the arts and collector of antiquities and books. See E. König *Kardinal Giordano Orsini* (+ 1428) Freiburg, 1906.

^{xi} Now usually called Cyriaco of Ancona (1391-1452) and see ch. 1, nt. 42. Modern biographies include *Cyriac of Ancona: Later Travels*, ed. and trans. by E. W. Bodnar and C. Foss. Harvard University Press, 2004 and ‘Cyriacus of Ancona’s Journeys in the Propontis and the Northern Aegean, 1444-1445’, ed. and trans. by E. W. Bodnar and C. Mitchell, *Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society*, v. 112, 1976.

¹⁶ For Buondelmonti see Georg Voigt cit., vol. I, p. 408, and vol. II, p. 506. The description of Constantinople, which Buondelmonti provides in his work on the Greek archipelago, is printed in *Ioannis Cinnami Imperatii Grammatici histor. libri sex seu de rebus gestis a Ioanne et Manuel Comnenis imperatoribus*, ed. Carolus du Fresne, (Paris 1670), p. 179. The Hippodrome obelisk reads: “*agulia ex uno lapide in quattuor aeneis taxillis in altum erecta cernitur cubitorum XXIV et in pede ejus versus sic sonat*”. Ms. no. 2639 of the Library of the Viennese court contains an Italian translation.

¹⁷ Joannes Bapt. De Rossi, *Inscriptiones Christianae urbis Romae septimo*

If Buondelmonti did not have the knowledge or the ability to grasp the close relationship between the work of Horapollo and the obelisks, he nevertheless had multiple points of contact with humanist scholars, who would have been able to enlighten him about the meaning of his discovery. Poggio Bracciolini who was close to the Buondelmonti family as is demonstrated by the fact that the very young Vaggia Buondelmonti, together with a substantial dowry, was given in marriage to the old humanist bachelor.^{18,xii} The description of the island of Crete, which Buondelmonti had written during his journey, and which he had dedicated to Niccolò de' Niccoli shows the friendship and interest with which Niccolò followed the explorations of Cristoforo. And though Niccolò was not one who best knew the location and value of ancient manuscripts, which were not in fact in the "bulletin on all the news about libraries and books",^{19,xiii} he must have been informed very early on about the arrival of the manuscript of the Horapollo in Florence.

Certainly Niccolò, as a scholar and a friend of scholars, had the qualities necessary to be able to judge the importance of the Horapollo. He was thus the first to congratulate the fortunate buyer. And even if his knowledge of Greek was not good enough, he could still make use of the scholarly Camaldolese, Ambrogio Traversari,^{xiv} who was also inspired by the same passion for texts. By contrast, Niccolò had a rare knowledge of Latin literature, an acknowledged ability to assess a text on the basis of similar passages, and thanks to Poggio, who kept him informed of all important matters, was sufficiently educated in respect of antique monuments. Niccolò certainly knew the inventory of the obelisks thanks to the investigations of Poggio in Rome during the papacy of Martin V. Indeed, it is even likely that he knew of the existence of obelisks not on this list. In

speculo antiquiores, vol. II, part I, (Rome 1888), p. 362: "Scalamontius quoque in vita Cyriaci huius verbis usus, characteres hieroglyphicos incisos obelisco hippodromi Constantinopolitani dicit Phoenicios". To date the journeys, in addition to De Rossi, see in particular Voigt cit., vol. I, p. 269. By 1418, Ciriaco was for the first time in Byzantium, and before embarking on another journey to the same destination had gone to Rome, following the report of Scalamonti, of the "mirificos obeliscos". See De Rossi cit., p. 372.

¹⁸ Voigt cit., vol. I, p. 328; W. Shepherd, *Life of Poggio Bracciolini*, Florence 1826, p. 265. The wedding took place December 1, 1435. Vaggia was the daughter of Ghino Manente de' Buondelmonti and received a dowry of 600 florins.

¹⁹ Voigt cit., vol. I, p. 296 which is the classic description of Niccolò.

^{xii} Shepherd's biography is still the most authoritative work on Bracciolini and went to several editions and is now available online. See also P. W. G.ordan, *Two Renaissance Book Hunters: The letters of Poggio Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1974.

^{xiii} This phrase is a direct quotation from Voigt who uses it to describe Niccolò himself as the "bulletin [börsenblatt] of everything to do with books and libraries". So here Giehlow is emphasizing his point that Niccolò may not have known immediately about the arrival of the manuscript.

^{xiv} The Camaldolese were an order of monks founded in the eleventh century. Ambrogio Traversari (1386-1439) was one-time head of the order and one of the first humanist clerics. He attended the Council of Florence in 1439.

^{xv} This John XXIII was actually one of three anti-popes and the Pope was Gregory XII (1406-15). The Anonymous' work was the *de rebus antiquis et situ urbis Romae*.

^{xvi} A critical edition has been published as *De varietate fortunae* / Poggio Bracciolini; edizione critica con introduzione e commento a cura di Outi Merisalo. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1993.

fact Poggio lists only the obelisks that were then in the Vatican Circus, on the Campidoglio, in the area of the Pigna, and in the Hippodrome on the Appian Way. The first three monuments were at that time still standing, but the fourth was lying on the ground broken into four. Under John XXIII (1410-1415), the Anonymous Magliabechiano^{xv} had seen in the reeds near the Porta Salaria another "julia" and he reported also that some workers with poles had unearthed in the Circus Maximus, another monolith covered with debris.²⁰ Obviously Poggio rather superficially had not completed the list of these monuments when later he incorporated the inventory into his work, *On Changes of Fortune*.^{xvi} Niccolò like Poggio also knew that the obelisks of Roman marble that the Anonymous had collected from the tombs of the Caesars actually corresponded to the Egyptian obelisks reported by Pliny and was aware that the carved figures of animals and birds were in reality Egyptian inscriptions.

Assuming therefore that the two had adopted the Greek term "hieroglyphic" for such inscriptions, they must have referred to the relevant passages of Macrobius, the only text that contained the word before the discovery of Ammianus Marcellinus. During the papacy of Martin V, Poggio was given the

²⁰ See Jordan cit., vol II, pp. 182 ff. The Anonymous describes the "Agulia" at the bottom of his catalog of obelisks in the following words: "alia maxima omnium remansit coperta ruinis et est in circo praedicto et laboratores cum palangis saepius reveniunt eam". Jordan refers this statement to the obelisk mentioned above "in circo capitis bovis", i.e. what Poggio had seen in the Hippodrome on the Appian Way. Although this monument was still visible when the Anonymous writes: "jacet fracta coram pede suo et pes ejus elevatus est a terra", the impression is that this is the first obelisk mentioned in the "Circus prisci Tarquinii", i.e. in the Circus Maximus, which successive sources later report was buried and only came to light when it was excavated again. See below p. 69. The Capitoline obelisk reads: "alia vero fuit posita in foro majori sub Capitolio a latere S. Adriani . . . et ibi cum cinere et ossibus Julii Caesaris posita fuit et fuit XL pedum cum stella in vertice". That this confirms its position "sub Capitolio" is perhaps explained by the fact that the obelisk was put together with a second monolith that had been placed there and of which Zoega has confirmed from Bellonius and Mercati, see Zoega cit., p. 81. The Anonymous Magliabechiano also tells of three fragments that were lying beside the obelisk in the area of the Pigna ('fracta in sancta Macuto . . . cum illis aliis tribus petiis circa eam existentibus). In respect of these fragments see Zoega cit. Probably they also included the porphyry with hieroglyphs that Geoffrey Tory had admired at the beginning of the sixteenth century, "devant le front de Notre Dame de La Ronde", see Geoffrey Tory de Bourges, *Champ fleury*, Paris 1529, p. LXXIII. Finally, Philippo Beroaldo the Elder mentions the Capitoline obelisk (called the "lesser obelisk" to distinguish it from that of the Vatican) "et alia quaedam juxta Pantheon Agrippae"; see below, pp. 66 ff.

task of extracting the Ammianus from its German seclusion, thus reviving it from centuries of oblivion.^{xvii} More than all other Latin authors, Ammianus had dedicated himself to the obelisks and their signs which he explicitly called hieroglyphs. Of course, Niccolò^{xviii} was aware of the manuscript since he had had it copied²¹ and, as it was a very corrupt text, he tried to reconstruct the possible variations with the help of similar classical passages. It is therefore assumed that copying the extracts on the obelisks, Niccolò was forced not only to consult known sources but also to rely on his personal knowledge of the monuments. In such a way, serving philology, he ended up, thanks to Ammianus, by transforming himself into an Egyptologist and trying to complete, expand and enrich his knowledge.

In addition to the obelisks mentioned by Pliny, Ammianus lists four more in the fourth century CE, the period in which he lived, that still existed in Rome: one was in the Gardens of Sallust, two in front of the mausoleum of Augustus and one at the Circus Maximus. Constantine had had this last erected next to the monolith of Octavian. Ammianus describes in detail both the enormous undertaking involved in the transfer of the obelisk from the Hellespont to Alexandria and thence to Rome and the great effort needed to instal it. Furthermore, the author even tells of the ship that was purpose-built for the task and the forest of beams and ropes by which the giant was erected. The passage, in which he illustrates the technical means that were necessary for the transportation and the raising of this work, constituted a fruitful stimulus for the architects of the Renaissance, although not for Niccolò who was instead particularly attracted by the commentary by Ammianus on the meaning of the many signs of animals, birds and individual creatures with which the Egyptians were accustomed to adorn the surfaces of the obelisks and the walls of the subterranean temples. Ammianus defines the character of this script, called hieroglyphic or ieroglyphic, with the following words: “singulae litterae singulis nominibus serviebant et verbis, nonnunquam significabant integros sensus”, [Single letters served for single names and sometimes signified complete concepts (17, 4, 10)], making it clear that the vulture is the word that signifies nature (women) as the natural sciences say that amongst these birds there are no males, while the bee signifies a king, who must not only be an agreeable person but also on occasion must use his

^{xvii} It was acquired by dubious means by Poggio from Fulda in 1417. A description of subsequent manuscripts of the Ammianus can be found at www.ccel.org/ccel/pearse/morefathers/files/ammianus_oo_eintro.htm (5/10/11).

^{xviii} For more on Poggio and Niccolò see Steven Greenblatt *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern*, W.W. Norton, 2012.

²¹ See Voigt cit., vol. I, p. 241.

^{xix} This phrase appears to be a misreading of Ammianus 17. 4. 17 which actually tells of how the ship carrying the obelisk from Alexandria i.e. from the Nile was so large that it was feared that it would inundate the banks of the Tiber.

^{xx} The translation of the hieroglyphs from Ammianus on the obelisk of Navona according to Ermapione is completely fanciful. A full translation of the inscriptions which celebrate Thutmosis rather than Rameses is given by Dr. Birch in J. H. Parker *The Twelve Egyptian Obelisks in Rome* London: Murray, 1879. Ermapione is otherwise unknown and ironically in view of Kircher's own translation of the obelisk (see ch. 1 nt. xxxix above) even he calls him an impostor.

sting (17, 4, 11)), reflecting the fact that the bee has its honey but also makes use of his weapon. In this way, full of foreboding for the future flood,^{xix} the Egyptians proposed to immortalize the memory of the ceremonies and the deeds of kings. Ammianus even describes the content of the inscription that celebrated Rameses, which had been translated into Greek thanks to the work, now lost, of Ermapione.^{xx} All this excursus on hieroglyphs sprang from the idea that these signs conveyed the ancient authority of a presumed wisdom.²²

Niccolò had copied this instructive work in 1423, that is more or less at the time when Buondelmonti, who was in Rhodes in 1422, came to Florence with his treasured books. And so what a chain of ideas must have crossed Niccolò's mind, when, in the title of the *Horapollon*, he found the word "hieroglyph" in front of him? Surely he must have thought he had received an important source of Egyptian priestly wisdom, in fact that he had obtained a general key to interpret the hieroglyphic inscriptions on the obelisks. It can therefore be assumed that the main reason that prompted him to undertake the journey to Rome, which he had planned for some time but always delayed through nervousness, must have been these amazing discoveries. In fact during 1424, in the retinue of Cosimo de' Medici, Niccolò finally arrived in the eternal city²³ in the company of Poggio, who was able to give him a tour of the Roman world of ruins and obelisks. Of course, the question naturally arises whether these three eminent personalities did not immediately try to decipher the individual hieroglyphs perhaps in some naïve fashion. The fact is that for the first time after such a task had been dormant for a thousand years, the human intellect believed itself in a position to face such a challenge again.

It is no coincidence that from this moment on, the interest of the humanists in hieroglyphics could no longer be suppressed. Niccolò was noted as amongst the most zealous. Ciriaco explicitly defines him as "vir imprimis harum curiosissimus rerum" [a most curious man especially of such things]; in other words, an Egyptologist.^{xxi} And it is very likely that one of the manuscripts of the *Hieroglyphica* in the Laurentian Li-

^{xxi} See nt. 25 below.

²² See *Ammiani Marcellini Rerum gestarum libri*, ed. Gardthausen (Leipzig 1874) bk. XVIII and bk. XXII. Copies of this manuscript were in the possession of Cardinal Bessarion, the Malatesta and Montefeltro families, the Biblioteca Marciana and the Vatican. The first printed edition appeared in 1474.

²³ See Voigt cit., vol. I, p. 299.

brary was copied specifically for him.²⁴ Certainly Francesco Filelfo^{xxii} while he was staying in Florence between 1429 and 1434 after his return from Constantinople, had the precious manuscript copied in parchment adorned with his own cypher and with magnificent initials, a manuscript which indeed includes the *Hieroglyphica*, in addition to the illustrious Aristotle and Plato. And maybe even Cardinal Bessarion's manuscript

²⁴ In 1495 the inventory of the Medici Library, which partly absorbed the collection of Niccolò, describes (see *Inventario della libreria medicea privata*, Archivio Italiano Storico, Series 3, XX (1874), p. 79) under 677 *In caps scedarum et foliorum solutorum*: "Ori Apollinis Hieroglyphica in quinternionibus duobus solutis et papyreis absque numero et absque operimento aliquo". This manuscript appears to be identical with Plut. 58 cod. 8 (see Bandini cit., vol. II, p. 445) which consists of a paper manuscript of 15 sheets from the fifteenth century. It is probable, however, that over the years a few sheets of two loose quires have been lost, assuming that Bandini had not confined himself to count only those particular texts. This is the only manuscript that contains just the *Hieroglyphica*. In any case, it is impossible to determine with certainty whether this was the one in the possession of Niccolò or if rather this scholar had owned the Florentine Plut. 81 cod. 15 which begins with the *Aristotelis Moralia ad Eudemum*. This manuscript, like the manuscript of Filelfo, Plut. cod. 81. 20 is written on parchment of the fifteenth century (see Bandini cit., vol. III, p. 234), and coincides perhaps with Ἡθικὰ τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους πρὸς Εὐδῆμον listed in the inventory of Lorenzo in 1492 (see K. K. Müller, *Neue Mittheilungen über J. Laskaris und die mediceische Bibliothek*, in *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, 1 (1884), p. 375). But neither can we rule out that the manuscript matches the one in parchment of Filelfo, and even the *Inventarium librorum, qui sunt in domo Petri, actum . . . 31. Oct. 1495* gives at no. 722 a Greek text on parchment, namely *Aristotelis ethica ad Eudemum*; see *Archivio Storico* cit., p. 84. Despite the vague description, even in this case we can determine whether it matches one of the manuscripts still preserved in Florence. Thanks to the *Ricordi di Arienti, Libri e altre cose prestare cominciata questo di 20 d'Aprile 1486* (in *Archivio Italiano Storico*, Series 3, XXI (1875) p. 287), we deduce that as early as 1486 the manuscript of Filelfo was in the possession of the Medici. In fact, we read: "we received from M. Demetrius a Greek the undermentioned books, which he borrowed some time ago . . . namely Aristotle's *Ethica de Eudemum*, which I believe is from the books of Filelfo, the Greek" [de' libri del Philelfo greca].

According to Bandini the texts of Horapollon from the fifteenth century match. One assumes that they were copied immediately after the arrival of the manuscript in Florence and it is clear that even Niccolò procured a copy for himself. Cosimo gave his books to the Biblioteca Marciana see Voigt cit., vol. I, p. 405. There is no record in Bandini of the existence of Plut. 81 cod. 15. If it had belonged to Niccolò, it would have passed directly into his private library. Nor does the paper manuscript, Plut. 58 cod. 8, give any indication of a previous owner, but in this case the record may have been lost along with other papers. The inventory of 1456 (see E. Piccolomini, *Delle condizioni della Libreria medicea privata dal 1494 al 1508*, in *Archivio Italiano Storico*, Series 3, XIX (1873), p. 106) mentions neither the text of Horapollon nor any manuscript of the fifteenth century containing it, while with respect to editions of the Aristotelian *Ethics* one reads "di lectere antiche". In regard to deficiencies cited in the inventory, see K. K. Müller. cit.

^{xxii} Francesco Filelfo (1398-1481) was an early humanist who received his initial training in Constantinople from Chrysoloras, taught all over Italy but frequently antagonized his patrons with his arrogance.

of the *Hieroglyphica* comes from Florence. Given to the Republic of Venice, it helped to ensure that that city would become the most important forum for the study of hieroglyphics,²⁵ a role which had previously belonged to Florence.

And when, in 1433, Ciriaco stayed on the Arno and then expressed his intention to go to Egypt, his new Florentine friends must certainly have asked the tireless collector to copy hieroglyphs. Ciriaco did not forget this request and in 1435 he arrived in Alexandria, sailed up the Nile to the pyramids and on the largest he discovered an inscription – “an ancient epigram” – which he sent to Niccolò and to the Florentine public authorities. And at the same time Ciriaco demonstrated a characteristic trait; while he had been in Florence he had certainly heard of the new discoveries, but once in Egypt he seemed to forget all of them in view of the fact that once again he described this script as Phoenician as he had done ten years earlier for the hieroglyphs on the obelisk in Constantinople. It had originally been Lucan who considered the Phoenician script as the more ancient. Was it the passion of a collector which induced Ciriaco to attribute this origin to his discovery? The fact is that he later boasted that he did understand the meaning of the hieroglyphs, as he wrote to Carlo Marsuppini:

Nam modo pyramidum spectas miracula solers,
et legis ignotis scripta notata feris.²⁶

[For now look at the miraculous skill of the pyramids,
and read the texts in a script of unknown beasts]

²⁵ See H. Omont, 'Inventaire des manuscrits Grecs et Latins donnés à Saint Marc de Venise par le Cardinal Bessarion 1468', *Revue des Bibliothèques* IV (1894), p. 129. At no. 347 it reads: "Item vita sophistarum et Apollonii per Philostratum, pinax Cebetis et hieroglyphica in papyro". Bessarion came to Italy in 1438 with the Emperor John Palaeologus to attend the Council of Unification. Then he went to Florence where he had many of his books copied. In favor of a Florentine transcription is the incipit of its manuscript that coincides with that of the manuscript of Buondelmonti. After Bessarion's death in 1472 his library ended up in Venice.

²⁶ Laur. Mehus, *Kyriaci Anconitani itinerarium*, Florentiae 1742, p. 49 where Ciriaco writes: "(pyramidum) ad maximam antiquissimum Phoenicibus characteribus epigramma conspeximus, ignotum nostra aetate hominibus puto ob longinquam aevi vetustatem et magnarum et antiquissimarum artium imperitiam et desuetudinem, quod et tamen excepimus ut admirabile ac nostris praedigne adjecimus commentariis nec non primum exemplar Florentiae nostro Niccolao Niccolò, viro in primis harum curiosissimo rerum, misimus et alterum postea simile ad hanc utique florentissimam Tuscorum urbem". The *Carmen elegiacum* is reproduced on p. LXVIII. About the route that he took, see Voigt cit. De Rossi has searched in vain for the drawings of the hieroglyphs; one of these manuscripts is the abbreviated Latin manuscript from Naples.

Everything goes back to the years after his return to Italy which occurred in September 1437. Ciriaco spent the winter of 1441 to 1442 in Florence, where in 1439 the Council that had been attended by the Byzantine Emperor John VIII Palaeologus with his scholars, as well as the ambassadors of King Constantine of Ethiopia, the so-called Prester John,^{xxiii} had just ended. These people had come from lands where there were obelisks and hieroglyphs or it was alleged that there had been. So much so that after the religious dispute, discussion touched on these matters and, at least from what can be deduced from the famous medallion that Pisanello skilfully created for the Byzantine emperor, the obelisk of Constantinople came to play a significant role. The proof is the reverse of the medal which shows the monument with the cross on top and the emperor in prayer on the front. This was the first time that an artist employed this decorative element that would later be so widely used and not long after the obelisk was replaced on medals with hieroglyphs from the same monument.^{27,xxiv}

In view of the fact that the work of Horapollon was important because of the quantity and richness of its hieroglyphics, it is strange that a scholar so cultured and high-ranking as the papal secretary Flavio Biondo did not comment on the *Hieroglyphica* in his *Roma Instaurata*, dedicated in 1446 to Pope Eugene IV. And this is all the more remarkable when you consider that for a decade he had lived near the Curia Fiorentina.²⁸ Despite this omission however, this learned classical scholar nurtured a strong interest in monuments and in hieroglyphs to the point that when

²⁷ The medallion is reproduced in A. Heiss, *Les Médailleurs de la Renaissance: Vittore Pisano*, Paris 1881, pl. I, with a description on the reverse, "Jean VII devant un croix". Interestingly, the obelisk under the cross has not been remarked on. Even today in Rome there are obelisks which have a cross at the top.

²⁸ Biondi Flavii Forijuliensis Romae instauratae libri, in *Opera*, Basileae 1559, p. 231.



Fig. 7. The first page of the manuscript Marciana 391 of the Horapollon probably the source of Aldus' 1505 editio princeps

^{xxiii} The legend of Prester John had begun several centuries earlier. He is said to have ruled in China, Central Asia and India. The geography of Asia was so poorly known in the fifteenth century that it was believed in Europe that the Emperor of Ethiopia must be the legendary priest.

^{xxiv} Only the top one third of the Tutmoses III obelisk transported and erected by the Emperor Theodosius in the Hippodrome in Constantinople has survived but each of the sides has a column of hieroglyphs which commemorate a victory of the Pharaoh. The obelisk on Pisanello's medal does not look like the obelisk of Constantinople and this latter does not have a cross at the top. Vasari in his *Life of Pisanello* quotes a letter from Paulo Giovio describing the obverse of Pisanello's medal which he had in his possession as having a cross sustained by two hands symbolizing the union of the Greek and Latin churches. It is not clear which medal he is referring to.

he focused on their description, he felt compelled to apologize for having strayed too far beyond the walls of ancient Rome. Biondo also knew the latest research since he not only cited Pliny and Ammianus extensively, but also recalled a passage in Tacitus, just discovered, where the Roman historian reports that the Egyptians had preserved their ideas through figures of animals and that these were the monuments which had been preserved in stone.²⁹ True to the purpose of his work, which aimed to provide a topography of Rome, Biondo tried to ascertain the location of the obelisks, only falling into the error of Cassiodorus who had not been able to distinguish the obelisks of the Mausoleum from those of the Campus Martius. According to classical sources two monuments had been erected in this piazza, one dedicated to the moon, the other to the sun.³⁰ Biondo believed that he had located these works in the Gardens of Sallust and the Campus Martius identifying them with the two monuments in the mausoleum that were still on the ground, but of these he had only had the opportunity of seeing the Sallustiano on the Pincian Hill. Of the other, the author repeated word for word the remark of Pliny about its use as a gnomon, criticizing the latter's argument that the inaccuracy of the sundial, in reality a result of the passage of the centuries, was due to a change in the Earth's orbit. Despite this exhaustive compilation, Biondo never mentions the Horapollo. Is it possible that this silence is to be traced back to his poor relationship with the circle that revolved around Poggio? It seems unlikely that the mysterious *Hieroglyphica* was reserved for the exclusive use of these scholars but it is possible that Biondo knew of the text but not understanding Greek was not able to exploit its contents. This would explain why he not only discontinued references to Ammianus when the latter reproduced the Greek translation that Ermapione had made, but is also silent with respect to Horapollo. On the other hand, by doing so Biondo risked the charge that he was recording authors whom he was obviously not able to read.

Those humanists who like Francesco Filelfo knew Greek, and had the good fortune to possess the text of the *Hieroglyph-*

²⁹ Ibid. "Et Cornelius Tacitus sic scribit: primi per figuras animalium Aegyptii sensus mentis effingebant et antiquissima monumenta memoriae humanae impressa saxis cernuntur"; see Voigt cit., vol I, p. 251.

³⁰ On this passage of Cassiodorus see the comments of Bernardo Rucellai or Oricellarius *De urbe Roma*, in *Rerum ital. script.* (Tartini), vol. II, Florence 1770, p. 1003: "sunt tamen qui ab obeliscis arguant circensium aliquid simile et in valle Martia (ita enim Cassiodorus appellat) celebratum, quod rectius considerantibus perfecto longe obscurior locus apparebit". On Rucellai see below, p. 62.

ica, did not hesitate to take the opportunity to make use of their learning. Thus, in the dispute as to whether the Egyptians or the Jews had invented the sundial, Filelfo consulted Horapollo and in October 1444 sent his opinion from Milan to Francesco Scalamonti, the biographer of Cyriaco of Ancona.³¹ The eel, which Filelfo cites as a symbol of envy to exemplify how the ancient Egyptians had replaced words with signs coincides with an explanation that Horapollo provides in the *Hieroglyphica*.^{xxv} Not only that, apparently Filelfo had already examined parallel passages since the second hieroglyph described in the letter – the hare as a symbol of hearing – is borrowed directly from Plutarch's *Questioni Conviviali*.³² The interest in studying hieroglyphs crossed the borders of Florence, reaching ever wider humanist circles. Filelfo passed on information taken from Horapollo, in this way instructing his countrymen in his hometown of Ancona, while Ciriaco brought his collection of inscriptions to the same city. Nevertheless it seems that Ciriaco did not spend much time on the difficult contents of the *Hieroglyphica*, since the bishop of Padua, Petrus Donatus, who was a close friend, composed a list of important Egyptian authors without naming Horapollo.³³

In Marsilio Ficino the characteristics that led to the study of the *Hieroglyphica* are found more prolifically.^{xxvi} Proficient in Greek, Marsilio had had access from his youth to the Medici library which housed the manuscript of the Horapollo thanks to its acquisition of the legacy of Filelfo. In addition, Marsilio was a philosopher and the director of the Platonic Academy in Florence. Thus, just as Plato himself had learned from the Egyptian priests, Marsilio, in addressing the text of Horapollo, immersed himself in reading Plato and the Neoplatonists, so that he was able to better understand the importance of the *Hieroglyphica* as a source of original wisdom.

At first, his opinion was reinforced by the view, then commonplace, about the origin of the writings of Hermes Trismegistus.^{xxvii} At the time it was not known that the treatise *De*

^{xxv} The only reference to the eel in Horapollo is in II.103 where it signifies isolation and not envy.

^{xxvi} Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499) under the patronage of Cosimo de Medici translated many of Plato's dialogues as well as the Corpus Hermeticum and the works of the neoPlatonists Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus. He wrote on his own account many works including the *Theologica Platonica* and was the tutor of Lorenzo de Medici and Pico della Mirandola. Not for nothing was he, as Giehlow says, appointed the head of the new Platonic Academy. For further discussion see *Marsilio Ficino: His Theology, His Philosophy, His Legacy*, Allen, M. J. B., and V. Rees, eds., Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002.

^{xxvii} The Greek god Hermes was grafted on to the Egyptian god Thoth during the Hellenistic period and given the title Trismegistus; the Platonic Christian texts called the Corpus Hermeticum were attributed to him. Since Trismegistus was believed to have lived at least 1,000 years before Christ, it was assumed by some that Plato must have derived much of his philosophy from Trismegistus rather than vice-versa. It was only in the early 17th century that the scholar Casaubon proved from textual inferences that the Corpus must have been written at the earliest in the second or third centuries CE. See also Daniel Stolzenberg, *Egyptian Oedipus*, Chicago: Chicago U.P. p. 155 where the activities of three different individuals named Hermes are described from Arabic sources.

³¹ *Francisci Philelphi epistolae*, Venice, 1502. With regard to the sundial there is in fol. 31 a letter from 1441 to Cato Sacco and in fol. 34 the letter quoted above.

³² See Plutarch IV, *Sympos. Quaest.* 5, 3, and Leemans cit., p. 445.

³³ See Ms. Ham. 254 in the National Library of Berlin. The list cites as historians: "Manethon Egiptius, Cheremon stoicus de vita antiquorum Egipti sacerdotum, Berosus, Appion historicus in libris Egiptiacis, Hieronymus Aegyptius"; as philosophers, Hermes Trismegistus and Plotinus. Donatus died in 1447; see Th. Mommsen, 'Ueber die Berliner Excerptenhandschrift des Petrus Donatus', *Jahrbuch der königlich preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, IV (1883), p. 120.

xxviii See also Fowden cit. *passim*.

xxix In the Greek myth, Hermes was sent by Zeus to kill Argus who with his one hundred eyes was protecting the nymph Io after she had been metamorphosized into a heifer. But in the Egyptian context of Hermes Trismegistus, Argus assumes a more important role. Valeriano in the *Hieroglyphica* fol. 430^r describes him as the "machina mundi", the mover of the world as described by Trismegistus in the *Pimander* and ends his entry with the sweeping statement "sub Argi imagine mundum universum comprehendit Aegyptiorum theologia". Valeriano does not mention the episode of the killing of Argus which would seem antithetical to the latter's representation as the "mundum universum" except possibly in the context of the struggle between the old pagan beliefs and the rise of Christianity. See for further discussion Brian P. Copenhaver, 'Hermes Theologus: The Sieneese Mercury and Ficino's Hermetic Demons', *Humanity and Divinity in Renaissance and Reformation*, eds. J. W. O'Malley, T. M. Izbicki and G. Christianson, Leiden: Brill, 1993.

xxx Ficino says in the opening of the Preface to his translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*: "O tempore: quo Moyses natus est: floruit Athlas astrologus Promethei physici frater: ac maternus auus maioris Mercurii: cuius nepos fuit Mercurius Trismegistus".

voluntate divina, which was believed to have been translated by Apuleius and the Greek text *De potestate et sapientia*, attributed to Pimander, were actually apocryphal works. Also, no one knew that in Alexandria, after knowledge of the meaning of the hieroglyphs had been lost, the Hermetic literature had produced texts which interwove Eastern and Neoplatonic ideas.^{34, xxviii} Indeed, as the first work in his Platonic studies, Cosimo de' Medici had instructed the young Marsilio to translate the *Pimander* into Latin, the manuscript of which had just been brought from Macedonia to Florence by the monk, Leonardo da Pistoia, since it was thought that Hermes Trismegistus was the founder of philosophy. In fact, according to Neoplatonic tradition, the Hellenized Egyptian god of the moon, that is Tehuti or Thoth, was considered *ter maximus*, the greatest philosopher and priest, and the supreme king of ancient Egypt. In the introduction with which Ficino prefaced the translation which was completed in 1463, printed in 1471 in Treviso and frequently republished, he records that this Mercury killed Argus,^{xxix} and had enacted laws, taught science and even invented letters in the form of animals and trees.³⁵ From that script, he must have transcribed the *Asclepius* and the *Poimandres* and then translated both into Greek, a language, which was familiar to Trismegistus. The admiration for a book so old and for its important prophecies, which predicted the end of paganism and the rise of Christianity, was remarkable and ended up by being transferred also to the Horapollo, which derived its script from an original from which it was assumed Hermes Trismegistus had also drawn his texts.

Although after reading the *Phaedrus*,^{xxx} Marsilio was to change his opinion with respect to Hermes, considering him an honored priest equal to a god rather than an ancestor of Mercury, he continued to believe that Hermes had used the plant and animal script reserved for priests, for Egyptian columns and for the Temple of Sais, following the example of Zoroaster, while Hermes Trismegistus had invented the phonetic script.³⁶ At the time this

³⁴ R. Pietschmann, *Hermes Trismegistos*, Leipzig 1875.

³⁵ *Marsilii Ficini Opera*, Basileae 1576, p. 1836, in which we read: "Aegyptiis praefuisse eisque leges ac literas dedisse, literarum vero characteres animalium arborumque figuris instituisse" and "edidit vero librum Aegyptiis literis, idemque (Graecae linguae peritus), Graecis inde transferendo communicavit Aegyptiorum mysteria".

³⁶ In Ficino *Opera* cit., *In Philebum M. F. Commentario*, p. 1236 one reads: "Mercurius ejus (Zoroastris) exemplo commonitus suis sacerdotibus in animalium et plantarum figuris dedit literas, ne vulgus Theologiae esset con-

view seemed to be confirmed by the work on the Egyptian mysteries attributed to the neo-platonic Syrian, Iamblichus, of which Marsilio published in Florence in 1483 an abridged translation together with his great Latin edition of Plato. In this it was alleged that the Greek philosophers had traveled to Egypt to study the inscriptions on the columns, and that Pythagoras and Plato had themselves developed their own philosophies from this, while the Egyptian priests had dedicated to Hermes all their works, creating the so-called Mercurial books that – according to Marsilio – despite the Greek philosophical style, were originally written in Egyptian.³⁷ So it was then that the term “Egyptian columns” was used to designate the obelisks. Here then there seemed to be confirmed for the humanists the passage of Pliny, according to which the obelisks brought to Rome by Augustus were the sources of Egyptian philosophy.

Iamblichus was to provide confirmation of this belief. In his treatise on the symbolism in Egyptian theology, he explained how, in shaping their symbols, the Egyptians had copied aspects of the nature of the universe and of divine governance. In fact, they expressed nature symbolically in visible forms, with its underlying motivations and with the deity in vivid images, depicting the truth of these ideas. In this way the Egyptians used pictures to express multiple and profound concepts. Thus mud became a symbol of material^{38,xxxii} and the god seated on a lotus flower became divine intelligence. In effect, with this idea in mind, Marsilio interpreted the passage which his “divine” Plotinus had devoted to the hieroglyphs, concluding in 1492 his admirable translation of the Platonists with a commentary on this author who had been recommended to him by Cosimo. In the

xxxii A modern edition of Iamblichus work is *Iamblichus On the Mysteries*, eds. E. C. Clarke, J. M. Dillon and J. P. Hershbell, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003 which has a good introduction and full bibliography.

scium. Floruit autem in Aegyptii Naucratis, ut Plato scribit in Phaedro, quidam ex his, quos Aegyptii ut deos venerati sunt, cujus nomen ut apud Aegyptios Theuth, apud Graecos Hermes Trismegistus . . . Cum ille . . . vocis infinitatem animadverteret, medias quasdam species vocum investigavi!”

³⁷ Ibid. p. 1873: “Columnae Mercurii plenae doctrinis”, and then “Qui (libri) enim sub Mercurio titulo circumferuntur, opiniones mercuriales continent; etsi saepe philosophorum Graecorum stylo loquuntur, sunt enim ex lingua Aegyptiaca in Graecam translata a viris philosophiae non imperitis.”

³⁸ Ibid. p. 1991 (*Expositio symbolorum Aegyptiae theologiae*), “Imitantes Aegyptii ipsam universi naturam fabricamque deorum ipsi quoque mixticarum reconditarumque notionum imagines quasdam in symbolis conficiendis ostendunt, quemadmodum et natura rationes occultas in apparentibus formis quasi symbolis exprimit et dii veritatem idearum per manifestas imagines explicant . . . Quandoquidem lutum in sacris nominant, ut inducunt, hoc intellige mundi corpus atque materiam, initialemque virtutem huic insertam.” With regard to the manuscripts and editions of Iamblichus, see G. Parthey *Jamblichi de Mysteriis libri*, Berlin 1857.

eighth book of the fifth Ennead, Plotinus, whom Marsilio believed was the first to uncover the secrets of the ancients, describes the attempt by the Egyptians, a little out of caution, a little from natural disposition, to expose their mysteries not by means of a text that reproduced language, but through conceptual images of objects, which in turn were represented in different ways depending on their inner meaning. In this way, according to Marsilio, the Egyptian priests had come to formulate their most profound ideas, not with letters but with representations of plants, trees and animals. In so doing they would have wanted to create something that corresponded to divine thought, because the gods know that reality is not a changing image, but a Form, essential and immutable, the essence of things themselves. Hieroglyphs, then, should be understood as images of the divine Ideas. For example in this regard he uses the hieroglyph of the concept of time, that is, a winged serpent biting its tail. The image of the essential and unchanging circle formed by the serpent in fact contains several ideas: the variety and variability of the human concept of time which combined with a rapid circular motion suggests the beginning and the end and the idea that time teaches wisdom and both provides things and takes them away. This obviously reveals a study of the text of Horapollon and it is not by chance that Marsilio explicitly refers to other similar images of this work which he calls by the name of Horus.³⁹

With this we therefore have further evidence of the importance with which the scholars in Florence accorded the *Hiero-*

³⁹ Ibid. p. 1768: "Sacerdotes Aegyptii ad significanda mysteria non utebantur minutis litterarum characteribus, sed figuris integris herbarum, arborum, animalium; quoniam videlicet deus scientiam rerum habet non tanquam excogitationem de re multiplicem, sed tanquam simplicem firmamque rei formam." There follows the conception of time and finally one reads: "Totam vero discursionem ejusmodi una quadam firmaque figura comprehendit Aegyptius alatum serpentem pingens, caudam ore prenanthem caeteraque figuris similibus, quas describit Horus." The edition of 1576 shows only Ficino's additions, while the translation of Plotinus was used in the edition of Basel in 1559 where there is repeated (p. 461) the main passage of Plotinus on hieroglyphs, from Ennead V, bk. VIII, ch. VI: "videntur vero mihi sapientes Aegyptiorum . . . , ubi constituerunt sapientiae mysteria nobis significare, non uti fuisse figuris litterarum significaturis sermonis discursiones . . . , sed potius describentes imagines rerum singulas singularum easque depingentes in sacris clam rei ipsius discursum significavisse, quod videlicet sit scientia et sapientia quaedam imago sive exemplar et subjectum illud spectaculum una collectum neque sit excogitatio quaedam et consilium; postea vero ab ipsa illius imagine exemplari sive sapientia simul totum simulacrum in alio quodam fiat jam evolutum atque loquens in discussione quadam et causas, propter quas ita res institutae sint, inveniens, dum videlicet dispositio rerum, quod ita bene se habeat, movet admirationem."

glyphica. The fact that even Ficino, whose philosophical persona in the eyes of contemporaries sometimes assumed the form of a magician, would quote the text of the Horapollo, did nothing but increase the superstition and curiosity about the text. We would not even need the remarks (noted in the records of the Medicean Library),⁴⁰ according to which on April 20, 1486 the Filefian codex was returned by Demetrios Chalkondylas, an Athenian to whom the manuscript had been lent, to make the assumption that the scholars who knew Greek, were repeatedly challenged by the difficult text and the obscure commentary.

Over time, the *Hieroglyphica* was copied many times. And maybe even during this period there originated the treatise *Περὶ πολυσημάτων λέξεων ἐκ τοῦ Ὁρου* [Of the polysemous reading from Horus] which, thanks to Joannes Lascaris,^{xxxii} was later taken from the convent of San Giovanni in Verdura into the library that Francis I had established at Fontainebleau.⁴¹ As is proven by a fragment preserved in Naples^{xxxiii} from the turn of the fifteenth century, some passages from Horapollo were beginning to be translated into Latin but de-

xxxii Johannes Lascaris (1455-1535), a Greek scholar and emigré from Constantinople who was patronized by the Medicis in Florence, should not be confused with his fellow countryman, scholar and contemporary, Constantine Lascaris (1434-1501) who taught in Milan and Sicily. See ch. 4, nt. 10 below.

xxxiii A note on this Naples edition is given in Giehlows's Appendix 1 but is not included in the present edition.

⁴⁰ See above, ch. 2 nt. 24.

⁴¹ In the four Greek copies of the fifteenth century already mentioned three from the Laurentian and one from the Marciana in Venice one can add others that seem to have been completed in that period: no. 5 a manuscript in the National Library in Naples, Chart. III E. 5 (see Appendix 1); no. 6 a manuscript in the Escorial Library (see P. Miller, *Catalogue des manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque de l'Escurial*, Paris 1848, p. 73) in an insertion between the ἀλλεγορίαι Ὁμηρίων of Heraclitus and a collection of proverbs; no. 7 the manuscript no. 194 of the catalogue of the Escorial Library, quoted by Miller cit. at no. 355, drawn up in the middle of the sixteenth century by Nicolaus de Torre under the title *Théorie sphérique des corps celestes . . . Explication de l'Astrolabe . . . Hieroglyphes d'Horapollon*. Since the earliest donor to the Library of the Escorial was Gonzalez Perez, who owned the book collections of the King of Naples and Alfonso V of Aragon, it is possible that the latter manuscript was copied for this king. No. 8 the manuscript of 1550 mentioned above is listed as no. 60 in the alphabetical catalog of Greek manuscripts acquired under Francis I, Ἀριστοφάνους πλοῦτος καὶ ἄλλα διαφορὰ περὶ πολυσημάτων λέξεων τοῦ Ὁρου see H. Omont, *Catalogues des manuscrits Grecs de Fontainebleau sous Francois I et Henri III*, Paris 1889. About the place where this manuscript, now lost, was found, i.e. the library of the convent San Giovanni in Verdura or ἐν τῷ ἁγίῳ Ἰωάννῃ τῆς Οὐαρδίνης and how Joannes Lascaris described such a monastery during a visit he made as book buyer for Lorenzo the Magnificent, see Müller cit., p. 389. No. 9 derives from the manuscript Morellianus, now lost, dating from the fifteenth century, see Leemans cit., p. xxviii. It was a fragment of the first book. - It is evident that the list of Greek manuscripts provided by Leemans is both too short and at the same time too broad. The manuscript Paris 2832, listed as no. VIII, is identical to no. X, described as a manuscript from the library "Cardina-

spite the great interest in the text, it was not fully translated or reproduced during the fifteenth century.

Later complaints constantly expressed during the period about the shortcomings of the manuscripts and their contents which were difficult and perhaps incomprehensible, even to the Greeks, adequately explain the resistance during the fifteenth century to preparing an edition of the Horapollo. Even if its discovery had initiated the study of hieroglyphics, the result was, for the reasons stated, that the text ended up taking second place, where it stayed as long as scholars continued to hope that they would be able to solve the mysteries of the hieroglyphs with the help of the ancient authors who were more accessible because they were translated into Latin or because they were already published. Above all these humanists were less inclined to philosophical speculation and it was artists in particular who focussed on these Latin sources. So much so that their renewed and growing interest in Egyptian studies eventually made the publication and translation of the *Hieroglyphica* inevitable.

✎ *Latin translations of Greek commentaries on Hieroglyphics*

Around the middle of the fifteenth century many Greek authors were translated and since the art of printing had just been introduced into Italy, they were published in print. These classics contained abundant information on Egyptian symbols and hieroglyphs and this appeared to offer sufficient material for an interpretation. And these indications were contained in texts favored in humanistic circles, such as the *Histories* of Herodotus, the *Library* of Diodorus and in a work like the *Praeparatio Evangelica*^{xxxiv} of Eusebius, put into Latin at the

^{xxxiv} From the early part of the fourth century.

lis Ridulphi." Cardinal Ridolfi, nephew of Leo X, had collected books with the help of Lascaris. At his death in 1550, the basic elements of the library went to Marshall Pietro Strozzi, and then passed on by Catherine de' Medici, cousin of the latter, they came into the possession of the French royal family, before finally moving to the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris, see Omont, *Inventaire sommaire* cit. above p. 1, nt. 9. Furthermore, Omont p. 82, cites a reference to another manuscript of Horapollo, i.e. no. 2992 (see Leemans, no. IX). It was copied in the sixteenth century by Cäsar Strategos for Jean Hurault, seigneur de Boistaillé, French Ambassador to Venice (d. 1572), see Léopold Delisle, *Le cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale*, vol. 1, Paris 1868, p. 213. The manuscript consists of several codices. It seems that the Horapollo, along with *Apollonius Tyanei epistolae*, *Cebetis Tabulae* preceding it, had been transcribed from the manuscript of Bessarion. For its contents see *Catalogus codicum Mss. Biblioth. Regiae*, vol. II, Paris 1740, p. 587. The manuscript of Lyon, quoted by Leemans at no. XI is a Latin translation, see Delandinius, *Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Lyon*, Paris 1812. There are no hints as to the date or origin of this manuscript.

request of Pope Nicholas V by translators such as Lorenzo Valla, Poggio and Giorgio Trapezunzio.

After a manuscript of the *Praeparatio Evangelica* was discovered in Rome the humanist pope entrusted to Giorgio Trapezunzio^{xxxv} the translation of this apologetic work of Eusebius as a historian who was particularly esteemed by the Church.⁴² Although some passages were suspected of heresy, the contents of the text aroused interest because the various pagan doctrines were treated *ad absurdum*, and even Platonic philosophy was described as a plague of Moses. Giorgio was asked to omit the parts which could give rise to scandal but he was not satisfied and, as he himself wrote, in his effort to provide only the 'gems', he left gaps which quickly aroused criticism that focussed on the wider omissions in the translation. All this, however, did not affect the overall thrust of the work. In the dedication Trapezunzio points out that Eusebius not only knew the whole of Greek literature perfectly, but was also able to make a concise summary of the classical authors he used. Scholars thus came to accept, albeit only through passages which were only partially authentic, opinions on Egyptian theology and its symbolism expressed by Plato, Diodorus, Plutarch, Porphyry and so on. Relying on Diodorus, Eusebius in fact illustrates the reasons that had led him to study the Egyptian worship of animals, reasons which Biondo shared with him especially the deification of a heraldic animal that had brought victory, or that of some celebrated living person. Eusebius recorded, according to Porphyry, the emergence of the cult of animals, citing as an example the image of the poppy as a symbol of the state with reference to the multitudes that inhabit it. The translation by Trapezunzio contained numerous reports of very strange animals of which images could be formed from the limbs of humans or animals, as well as of their symbolic meaning. Hieroglyphs are explained as well: thus, for example, the Egyptians had depicted the universe with a circle similar to the Greek theta, at the center of which was placed a snake with the head of an eagle, the hawk was the symbol of fire and spirit, the crocodile represented drinking water, while the weasel symbolized eloquence and the hippopotamus Typhon. Not the least interesting were the remarks about the influence of Egyptian ideas on Greek philosophy. It was primarily their wish to elucidate these meanings that pushed these scholars to

^{xxxv} Giorgio Trapezunzio (1395-1472) born in Crete but from a family from Trepizond was an irascible and itinerant scholar who was nevertheless appointed to the Roman Curia.

⁴² See Voigt cit., vol. II, p. 141. Regarding the edition used here see above p. ch. I nt. 24.

xxxvi Only Books 1-5 and 11-20 of Diodorus' *Library of History* from a total of forty survive. Several modern versions exist e.g. *Library of History: Loeb Classical Library*, trans. C. H. Oldfather, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935. Other editions can be viewed on-line. A copy of Poggio's translation is in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek and can be viewed at http://www.digital-collections.de/index.html?c=autoren_index&l=en&ab=Poggio+Bracciolini%2C+Gian+Francesco (6/30/2012).

xxxvii The Inscription to Isis is also contained in Diodorus in 1.27.3-4 immediately preceding the Osiris extract given by Giehlow (Bracciolini's translation p. X") as follows: "Ego Isis sum Aegypti Regina a Mercurio Erudita. Quae ego legibus statui. Nullum solvet. Ego sum Mater Osiridis. Ego sum prima frugum irentrix. Ego sum Oru regis mater. Ego sum in Astrocanis refugens. Mihi Bubasta urbs condita es. Gaude, gaude Aegypte quae me nutristi". This Latin extract copied word for word from Poggio is also included in Nostradamus' version of the Horapollon as an addition to ch. I.3: "what they mean by the year". Nostradamus edition dated approximately 1545 differs in small but significant ways from any of the Greek manuscripts listed by Leemans. Nostradamus says he used a manuscript from the "druids of Egypt" which he subsequently burned. See S. Rollet, *Interprétation des hieroglyphes de Horapollon/Nostradamus*, Petit, 1993.

widen their Egyptian studies since with their own pride of Roman culture it was not without envy that they regarded the scientific reputation of the Greeks.

The translation of the first five books of Diodorus Siculus^{xxxvi} undertaken by Poggio,⁴³ must have satisfied the curiosity aroused by the quotations which Eusebius had given from this work. Previously Giovanni Aurispa and Christoforo Garatone of Treviso, two apostolic secretaries, had brought the manuscripts of this author to Italy, where they were quickly copied. The translation by Poggio, not literal, but done in a good Latin prose, was completed with the help of Trapezunzio in the spring of 1451, thus before the two of them quarreled. As a result of its sensational content, it contributed decisively to the expansion of the circle of readers of the work. For the humanists, the novelty consisted above all in the fact that the text reported comments on the mythical era of ancient peoples and of Egypt, seen as a land of wonders. Everything else that had previously been scattered in several manuscripts, was, in the work of Diodorus, placed in a historical relationship, and was confirmed or explained or generally enriched and improved. Diodorus describes the geography of Egypt with its wonderful river and also the strange summer flooding of the Nile, providing even a description of the real or imaginary animals that inhabit it. Moreover he discloses a vision of the interior of Africa and its Ethiopian people, provides information on the history of the ancient Egyptians from the very beginning, their immigration from Ethiopia, which took place under the guidance of the king revered as the god Osiris, and his successful campaign to India, the sources of the Danube River and the ocean. Diodorus even describes the inscriptions that were carved on the pillars of Nisa in Arabia erected in honor of Osiris and his consort Isis.^{44,xxxvii} With the same excitement the humanists could

⁴³ See Voigt cit., p. 185. Poggio divided the first book into two distinct parts: one on Egypt as a region, the other on the deeds of the Egyptian kings, so that the third book of Diodorus corresponds to the fourth book of Poggio. Regarding Aurispa's copy see *ibid.*, vol. I, p. 265; in regard to Cristoforo Garatone da Trevigi, see Marini, *Degli Archiatri Pontifici*, Rome 1784, p. 153. Cristoforo went to Constantinople to dispute with Mark of Ephesus, then, in 1442, he went on to Hungary. Eugenius IV appointed him canon of Padua; he was still living in the time of Nicholas V.

⁴⁴ The inscription of Osiris begins in this follow way: "Mihi pater Saturnus, deorum omnium junior. Sum vero Osiris rex, qui universum peragravi orbem . . . , neque ullus est in orbe, ad quem non accesserim locus, docens omnes ea, quorum inventor fui. - Haec tantum in columnis legi posse affirmant, alia quae plurima sunt, tempore esse corrupta; de his sane, quae in

read descriptions of the deeds of king Sesostris.^{xxxviii} According to Diodorus, this latter had built columns with epigrams in Egyptian, that is in the sacred script, in which he describes his expedition to Thrace.^{xxxix} Diodorus lingers long on Egyptian architecture and sculpture, on the obelisks of Thebes and the pyramids – tombs of the kings. However, as he himself mentions elsewhere, the Egyptians were not the only ones to have such wonderful buildings since Semiramis had also transported a giant obelisk to Babylon,^{xl} and Queen Zarina of Sakkara had had a huge triangular pyramid built.^{xli} The comments on Egyptian theology were already known thanks to Eusebius, who had made use of Diodorus. Nevertheless, this translation of the original complemented them, describing the customs and traditions, examining in particular the status and vast erudition of the priests, which since the days of Orpheus had attracted the most important Greek philosophers. Discussing the inventions that the Egyptians, as settlers from Ethiopia, had taken to their new homeland, Diodorus addresses the issue of their writing, explicitly named “hieroglyphic,” a term that Poggio always translates as *sacrae litterae*. This script, used by the entire people of Ethiopia, according to Diodorus would become a sacred writing used only by priests and learnt from their elders *privatim*, while the rest of the population used a different system. In the translation of Poggio, Diodorus says the following in regard to the shape and character of the Ethiopian or hieroglyphic writing: “Sunt Aegyptiorum litterae variis animalibus extremitatibusque hominum atque instrumentis sed praecipue artificum persimiles. Non syllabarum compositione aut litteris verba eorum exprimuntur, sed imaginum forma earum significatione usu memoriae hominum tradita” [the letters of the Egyptians are like animals or parts of men and instruments especially of artisans. Their words are expressed not by the composition of syllables or letters but in the form of pictures the significance of which is handed down through tradition in the memory of men]. Therefore, a falcon or sparrow hawk means a rapid event, since the idea of speed, which distinguishes this bird, refers to anything that happens quickly. Similarly, the crocodile means evil, while an eye means the protector of justice and guardian of the whole body, and the open right

^{xxxviii} There were three Egyptian pharaohs named Sesostris or Senusret in Egyptian. Sesostris III (1862-1844 BCE) had successful campaigns in Palestine described by Herodotus (Histories 2.102-3 and 106) who nevertheless exaggerates the Pharaoh's successes.

^{xxxix} The region immediately to the north of the Bosphorus in present day Turkey.

^{xl} The reference to Queen Semiramis' obelisk, said by some to be one of the seven wonders of the world, is also in Diodorus at 2.11.4-5.

^{xli} According to Diodorus, (2.33.3) the pyramid was erected in her memory by the people of Sakkara after the death of the Queen.

sepulchris exstant, consentiunt fere omnes. Nam quae sacerdotes condita in arcanis habent, nolunt, ut veritas ignota sit, ad multos manere, poena iis adjecta qui ea vulgus proderent.” The edition used here is that of Venice from 1496 by Magister Joannem Cereto bk. I, p. VI.

hand represents generosity, the closed left hand, avarice. Other body parts and tools have a precise meaning by which the Egyptians used to infer in a mnemonic or contemplative way the object that they wished to indicate.⁴⁵

In his historical exposition, in respect of which the opinion of modern science differs from that of the humanists, Diodorus often clashed openly with Herodotus, sometimes describing the latter's remarks as fairy tales. This controversy was well suited to the native feelings which we have mentioned and ended by increasing the value of the work of the Sicilian author who, writing in Greek, was trying to harm the reputation of Herodotus. The fact is that the lack of appreciation of the great Greek author would continue for some time, since even Aldus Manutius seemed to find it necessary to defend his appreciation of the truth of the Greek historian.⁴⁶ Diodorus was therefore to have an important role in studies of the hieroglyphs of the fifteenth century, despite the fact that Valla gave up his translation of Herodotus shortly after the death of Nicholas V in 1455. Of course, compared to the Sicilian author, Herodotus does not raise many new issues, because he was copied by Diodorus. In respect of the system of Egyptian writing, Herodotus states, a fact unknown up to that time, that, unlike the Greeks, the Egyptians wrote from right to left, a practice that modern Egyptology has confirmed, and a rule which could only be broken for decorative reasons. Isidore of Seville had already used the information of Herodotus on the existence of both a hieratic and a popular writing. While not citing examples of individual hieroglyphs, Herodotus, as translated by Valla, reported the meaning of many *sacrae litterae Aegyptiae*, such as, for example, the case of the inscription on the pyramid of Cheops, which told of the huge expenditure for its construction.⁴⁷ In any case, it would be hard to find in the text of Diodorus a passage that reaches the level of the beautiful and famous contrast in

⁴⁵ Poggio cit., bk. IV.

⁴⁶ See Firmin Didot, *Alde Manuce et l'Hellénisme à Venise*, Paris 1875, p. 218. As regards the translation of Valla, see Voigt cit., vol. II, p. 185.

⁴⁷ *Herodotus ex versione Laurentii Vallae*, ed. Henr. Stephanus, 1561, p. 62: "In ipsa pyramide literae Aegyptiacae scriptae indicant, quantum sit erogatum in operarios pro apio, caepis et aliis, quod interpret earum literarum (utpote reminiscor) aiebat in summa mille et sex centa talenta pecuniae esse"; in on Euterpe (bk. II, ch. 106), is the description of the hieroglyphs inscribed horizontally on a rock in Ionia, "et ex humero ad alterum humerum pertinent per pectora sacrae literae Aegyptiacae insculptae, haec indicantes: Hanc ego regionem meis obtinui humeris." The comparison between the manners and customs of the Greek and Egyptians is in bk. II, ch. 3.

which Herodotus describes Greek and Egyptian customs, thereby characterizing the two peoples. This juxtaposition attests to the amazement of a Greek struck by the unique nature of the ancient Egyptian culture, a fact which could only encourage anew the researches of the curious humanists.

Corresponding to the abundance of information available on Egypt was the literary use made of these translations, primarily those of Eusebius and Diodorus. Suffice it to refer here to a text of the earliest generation of humanists, *Roma triumphans* by Biondo, dated 1459 and dedicated to Pius II, which deals with Roman antiquity.⁴⁸ The author must have been very happy to have no longer been hampered by the Greek language. So much so in fact that he quotes Eusebius word for word to describe in detail the nature of Egyptian religion, whose original cult of the bloodless gods^{xlii} and their eternal fires evidently resonated with him. Notwithstanding the remarks of Diodorus, Biondo continued to claim that writing was invented by a Phoenician, whom the Egyptians called Thor, the Alexandrians Thot and the Greeks Mercury. The author also takes up the subject of the obelisks, which decorated Rome and Italy, arguing, with a typically humanistic parochialism that the *pretor*, Cornelius Gallus, charged by Augustus to transport them, was born in Forlì, that is in his native city.⁴⁹

To demonstrate even further the influence of Eusebius and Diodorus we can look at an example from the ranks of the younger generation of humanists, who knew Greek, but were ignorant of the Horapollo and who rejected the fundamentals for an autonomous treatment of hieroglyphics. This was the Bolognese scholar Philippo Beroaldo the Elder. In his commentary on the *Asinus aureus* of Apuleius, a work which was extremely popular and which first appeared in Bologna in 1500, he outlined a general framework of the authors then in use for the interpretation of hieroglyphs.⁵⁰ Beroaldo presents this overview

⁴⁸ *Blondi Flavii Forijuliviensis de Roma triumphante libri decem* cit., p. 5, on the worship of animals, see above p. 14 ff. The animals which he mentions for their usefulness are: "canis . . . ad custodiendos homines; quapropter deus, qui apud eos Anubis vocatur, caninum habet caput; felis . . . ad scuta facienda" also: *the ibis, eagle, goat, wolf, crocodile*. On the latter one reads: "quia eorum terrore ab Arabia atque Libya latrones in Aegyptum natate non audeant."

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4: "Gallus poeta in patria nostra Foro-Julio genitus, praetor Augusti, abstulisse obeliscos concasque peregrini marmoris, quibus etiam nunc urbs Roma et Italia est adornata." Did Biondo know of the obelisks of Catania, Velletri and Benevento when he speaks of the monuments in Italy? For this see Zoega cit., pp. 84, 86 ff. and 646 ff.

⁵⁰ Here we have used the edition *Commentario Philippo Beroaldo conditi in asinum aureum Lucii Apuleji*, Venice: Simonem Papiensem called Bivilaquam, 29th April 1501.

^{xlii} The veins of the Olympian gods were filled with a golden fluid, "*ichor*", rather than blood. Thus Homer, *Iliad* 5.339-340, "... and blood immortal flowed from the goddess, / *ichor*, that which runs in the veins of the blessed divinities". (trans. Richard Lattimore).

with the description of how Apuleius, an initiate in the cult of Isis, experienced in person mystical Egyptian events and priestly ceremonies, above all because the instruments carried in these processions offered him ample comparative material. With a subtle argument, Beroaldo thus sought to combine the representation of the open left hand, a symbol of fairness, with the hieroglyph of the closed left hand to which Diodorus gives the meaning of greed. What's more, he attempts to expand the meaning of the poppy, interpreted by Eusebius as a symbol of the state, from the image of fecundity⁵¹

The priestly books recovered in the sanctuary, which Apuleius had described as "*libros literis ignorabilibus praenotatos, partim figuris hujusmodi animalium concepti sermonis compendiosa nota suggerentes, partim nodosis in modum rotae tortuosis capreolatim condensis apicibus ac curiositate prophetarum lectione munita*", [books written in unknown letters, partly made up of the figures of animals suggestive of the overall concept of the word, partly in the form of winding and twisted wheels thickened at the apex, all aimed at overcoming a reading by the profane] also provided an opportunity to analyze hieroglyphs in greater detail. That talking about "books" means rolls of papyrus in hieratic script, is now obvious to anyone who has seen one: the letters are aligned to each other, just as Apuleius describes, partly swelling in clusters, partly flowing in round or acute spirals in this way making up Egyptian cursive, that is the hieratic as defined by Clement of Alexandria. It is therefore a remarkable fact that Beroaldo, who knew neither the famous passage in Clement on the difference between the hieratic and the hieroglyphic nor rolls of papyrus, had correctly described the different texts of these sacred books, by designating the first as hieroglyphic and the second hieratic.^{52, xlii} It appears that the wish for stylistic variety had made him reverse the two definitions, since the examples of script that he knew directly were those of the Roman obelisks; for hieratic letters there were the hieroglyphs of the Capitoline obelisk as well as the fragments that were at the Pantheon, in respect of which he cites Pliny, Lucan, Tacitus, Marcellinus,

xliii In nt. 52 Giehlow contradicts his statement in the text. Beroaldo does in fact reverse the definitions.

⁵¹ Ibid., M6^v Nr^r "*annotandum ab eodem Eusebio tradi papaver esse symbolum foecunditatis*" (Eusebius reads: "*civitatis enim symbolum papaver est: papaver propter fertilitatem et multitudinem animarum*"); for the following passages on hieroglyphs, see Or^r and oz^r.

⁵² Beroaldo refers to the hieroglyphs in his commentary in the words "*partim hujusmodi animalium*", while he defines as hieratic the passage: "*capreolatim condensis apicibus*."

Macrobius and even Chaeremon. It might therefore be assumed that the source that allowed Beroaldo to correctly interpret the two types of writing was a fragment of a work by Chaeremon, the fragment from Tzetzes which was still unidentified and which remained unnoticed for a long period. However, it is likely that Beroaldo knew Chaeremon only through the lexicon of Suidas, printed for the first time in Milan in 1499.⁵³

In fact, all the authors quoted by Beroaldo were printed immediately after the introduction of printing into Italy. The translation of Eusebius appeared from Nicolas Jenson in 1470, and later was reprinted several times, including at Treviso in 1480. Poggio's work was first printed in Bologna in 1472, while the first edition of the translation of Valla was in 1474. The Latin authors were printed before these translations; thus Pliny and Apuleius had appeared in Rome in 1469, Macrobius first in 1472, Ammianus Marcellinus in 1474, Tacitus and Lucan in 1477. Remarks on hieroglyphs, given in each of these books, aroused interest in Egyptian writing and these seeds found particularly fertile ground in the places where there were obelisks and other Egyptian antiquities. If in fact their strange forms had always aroused curiosity, now there was a conscious attempt to extract the philosophical and historical secrets supposedly hidden in them.

⁵³ The related text had been reviewed by Demetrios Chalcondylas; see Firmin Didot cit., p. 448.

CHAPTER 3

☪ HIEROGLYPHS ON THE EGYPTIAN MONUMENTS KNOWN IN ROME IN THE XVTH CENTURY

A very happy opportunity for the study of hieroglyphs in Rome, an opportunity that was in effect the beginning of the humanist movement, was when part of the Pignaⁱ was subjected to extensive architectural modifications. There, not far from the Pantheon, were the ruins of the *Iseum Campense*, one of the largest and most beautiful places of worship dedicated to Isis, whose followers had multiplied rapidly in Rome after the conquest of Egypt.¹ To decorate this temple the Roman emperors had both looted Egyptian shrines and commissioned numerous reproductions. The ground in the vicinity of St. Stephen de Cacco, San Macuto and the convent of Minerva hid a priceless heritage of Egyptian antiquities. Already during the time of Cola di Rienzo there had been copied a *cynocephalus*ⁱⁱ which had been discovered a long time before and was located at St. Stephen de Cacco, while the obelisk and the three fragments seen by the Anonymous close to San Macuto, had probably been brought to light in 1374 during the renovation of the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. It was certainly during that period that there were excavated from around the Church the two sphinxes with hieroglyphs described later by Fulvio, and the basalt lions shown for long periods in front of St. Stefano. In the same place in the time of Poggio a huge marble image of a *recubans*,ⁱⁱⁱ often identified with the Nile, was found and subsequently reburied. So many sculptures, bronze tablets and gems with Egyptian symbols and signs were dug up at the time that today they can no longer be identified with certainty!

But this was only the beginning. During the excavation of the Pantheon, under Pope Eugenius IV, two larger than life-size lions were found, whose hieroglyphics sang the praises of the last pharaoh, Nectanebo II.² They remained for a long period decorating the entrance to the Pantheon until, at the end

¹ R. Lanciani, 'L'Iseum et Serapeum della region IX', *Bullettino della Commissione archaeologica comunale di Roma*, series 2, XI (1883), pp. 3 ff.; A. Michaelis, 'Storia della collezione Capitolina di antichità fino all'inaugurazione del museo (1734)', *Bullettino della Imperiale istituto Archeologico Germanico*, VI (1891), pp. 30 ff. Lanciani does not examine the extent to which the three pieces already seen by the Anonymous Magliabechiano could be identical to the fragments found between 1555 and 1559. Neither does he take into account Beroaldo or Geoffrey Tory.

² O. Marucchi, *Il Museo Egitto Vaticano*, Rome 1899, no.s 16-18, p. 32.

ⁱ The Pigna is a central section of Rome named after a bronze pine cone which decorated a fountain adjoining the *Iseum* in ancient Rome. The pine cone is now in the Cortile del Belvedere.

ⁱⁱ A cynocephalus is a figure of a man with the head of a dog, an image frequently recurring in ancient literature (see for instance *Odyssey* 20.14). It probably derived from travellers' descriptions of the baboon or from a misrepresentation of the image of the Egyptian god Anubis who has the head of a jackal.

ⁱⁱⁱ A *recubans* is a sculpture of a reclining figure, in Roman times usually depicting a river god. A large *recubans* is exhibited in the Capitoline Museum and is said to represent the god Oceanus. See Ch. 5 nts. 75/liii for a reference to the Nile *recubans* now in the Vatican Museums. A similar motif in modern times, the Meso-American reclining figure Chac-mool inspired the sculptor Henry Moore in his series of reclining figures.

of the sixteenth century, they were used to adorn the fountain in the Termini. It is possible that the fragment of porphyry with hieroglyphs, seen at the time by Tory in front of the Pantheon, was discovered on the same occasion. In addition, it was under Pope Nicholas V that the whole subsoil of Rome underwent major excavations, and in many places fragments or whole obelisks were brought to light. Besides the great monoliths, which Pliny and Ammianus had already reported, studies of antiquity had been included in old local manuscripts, thus giving shape to the description later attributed to Publius Victor,^{iv} which listed no less than forty-two minor monuments^v one of which was located on the Isola Tiberina. This figure may seem exaggerated but it is possible that many pieces may have disappeared and that other individual fragments, which were then buried or transported again elsewhere, contributed to this calculation. On the Isola Tiberina there were actually fragments, which were then cut into small pieces, as in the Palazzo Orsini, while near the Capitoline obelisk minor monoliths were found, one of which is now identified with that which was later included in the Medicean collection.³ In Rome today, at least thirteen obelisks are still to be seen, although all are located in places other than where they were discovered.

As shown in the cited passages, the humanists of the fifteenth century knew precisely the monuments now located in Piazza San Pietro, in Piazza Navona, in front of Trinita dei Monti, the Pantheon and in the Villa Mattei. The obelisk of the Circus, now in the Piazza del Popolo, was discovered by accident while in 1463 there had already had been excavated fragments of the meridian belonging to the monolith-gnomon, now located in Montecitorio, and even if other obelisks were not brought to light, their existence was known and even to an extent some of their locations. It was known, for example, that the monolith now in the Lateran was then at the Circus Maximus, or that those now placed in front of Santa Maria Maggiore and the Quirinal had once adorned the Mausoleum of Augustus. The only monuments that we have no information from that period are those now in front of the Minerva, in the piazza by the station and on the Pincio. Although the last of these obelisks was

^{iv} Publius Victor's *De regionibus urbis Romae libellus aureus* was most likely first published in Milan by Scinzenzeler c.1503-6.

^v Publius Victor also lists 6 major obelisks. For modern studies on the obelisks see ch. 2 nt. ix above.

³ See Jordan cit., II. p. 299 and Zoega cit. p. 181. With regard to the obelisks that are currently in Rome, see Orazio Marucchi, *Gli Obelischi Egiziani di Roma*, Rome 1898, with illustrations of the hieroglyphs. With respect to the excavations at the obelisk-gnomon, see F. v. Reber, *Die Ruinen Roms und der Compagna*, Leipzig 1874, p. 264.

lying near Via Labicana, beyond the Porta Maggiore near Santa Gerusalemme, it was only reported by Fulvio in 1527. Traces of the other two, which had adorned the *Iseum*, were only discovered during numerous subsequent renovations.

☞ *Leon Battista Alberti and the hieroglyphs*

It is symptomatic of the interest that the scholars of the fifteenth century had for Egyptian antiquities and hieroglyphs that Egyptian obelisks were transported and erected in different places from where they were discovered. This was so even for the monolith of the Vatican, even though this was actually perceived as a relic because of the tradition that it was a witness to the martyrdom of St. Peter.⁴ Nicholas V, reading Pliny, Diodorus, and Ammianus, was too fond of construction to avoid being overtaken by an obsession to compete with the Pharaohs and the Caesars in the transport of such a giant block. He therefore decided to place the obelisk, topped by a bronze statue of the Savior, in front of the new basilica of St. Peter and to support it at the base with four huge figures of the apostles of the same material which were to replace the bronze lions that were thought to have once supported the monument.⁵ The project reveals a unique blend of Egyptian symbolism and Christian thought and in general the obelisks, even without the reference to the martyrs, enjoyed a welcome reception largely due to reports that the classical authors had provided of the character of Egyptian religion and of the original revelation of the Cross in the sacred books. Nicholas V died in 1455 before the realization of his plan, which was adopted by Paul II but the latter died suddenly in 1471 while discussions were continuing with the architect Rudolph Fioravante of Alberti, called Aristotle. A century later Paul III suggested the project to Michelangelo, who, it is said, refused out of fear of the difficulties involved. Only in 1586, under Sixtus V, was Fontana able to move the obelisk, transporting and placing it where it still is.^{vi}

Arguably, the architect of genius who had already suggested this extraordinary project to Nicholas V was Leon Battista Alberti. He and Nicholas had known each other since the time of the exile of the Curia in Florence, where the latter, still using the secular name of Thomas Parentucelli, had proposed it to the Church's highest office. Nicholas closely followed the stag-

^{vi} Domenico Fontana's *Della transportatione dell'obelisco Vaticano et delle fabbriche di Nostro Signore Papa Sisto V, fatte dal caualier Domenico Fontana architetto di Sua Santità*. Roma: Basa, 1590 is digitized and on the web at <http://purl.pt/6256/1/>.

⁴ The tradition dates back to a story of Saint Jerome, see Rucellai cit., col. 1116.

⁵ See Zoega cit., p. 623; Gregorovius cit., vol. VII, p. 229.

es of the architectural work of Alberti, the first draft of which he had shown the pontiff in 1452.^{6, vii}

Alberti was one of the greatest connoisseurs of ancient Rome; he had drawn and tirelessly measured its monuments and had compared them to the information provided by classical authors. One of the obelisks of the Circus Maximus seemed particularly interesting and the year before his death he showed it to Lorenzo de Medici, Bernardo Rucellai and Donato Acciaiuoli, sent to Rome in 1471 to honor Paul II's successor, Sixtus IV. Later Rucellai referred to this memorable promenade that he, youthful and in the company of the elderly Alberti, had made through the ruins of Rome.⁷ It seems that at this time the obelisk was rediscovered only in part, because he saw only huge fragments of Numidian stone. Moreover, as Rucellai stated, more excavation would have allowed them to see the individual pieces of the work. From this remark we realize that these Florentine visitors had glimpsed the obelisk of Augustus, now erected in the Piazza del Popolo, since the monolith of Constantine, now located in front of the Lateran, was in 1587 only excavated to a depth of about seven meters. The inscriptions and other markings on the obelisks had already attracted several interpretations. You can imagine with what excitement the hieroglyphs of the monument of Augustus must have been discussed, with its representations of eyes, limbs, vultures, hawks, ibis, geese, bees, circles and hooks. Unfortunately Rucellai is silent on the details of these conversations, but at least Alberti in his text on architecture gives his opinion of them.^{viii}

Analyzing the epitaphs, the signs and sculptures which could be used to decorate funerary monuments, Alberti takes the opportunity to compare a script composed of letters with Egyptian symbols.⁸ He stresses that the former has the defect of being known only to contemporaries and thus may subsequently be consigned to oblivion, as is shown by the inscriptions found in Etruria, whose alphabet – although resembling those of Greece and Rome – is incomprehensible.^{ix} Then he praises the Egyptian system, which, for example, designates an

vii L. B. Alberti *Libri de re aedificatoria decem* ed. Bituricus, Paris, 1512.

viii Bibliographical references to Alberti are given in Curran, 2007, p. 314 nt. 15. See also P. H. Michel, *La pensée de L.B. Alberti*, Paris 1930.

ix Since the time of Giehlow, much progress has been made in the decipherment of Etruscan which is now said to be closely related to Albanian. See, for instance, the website, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Translation/Etruscan_art, which describes elements of the language and suggests its origins.

⁶ Paul Hoffmann, *Studien zu Leon Battista Albertis zehn Büchern De re aedificatoria*, Leipzig 1883.

⁷ Rucellai cit., col. 1074. "Nos autem vidimus duce Alberto Baptista in ea parte ubi circus fuit, fragmenta praegrandia Numidici lapidis obruta rudibus, quae adhuc videre facile est funditus fodientibus".

⁸ See the edition of Geoffrey Tory, bk. VIII, ch. III, *De sepulchrorum titulis, notis et sculpturis* fol. CXXIII, where Tory adds the notation *Hieroglyphica* in the margin.

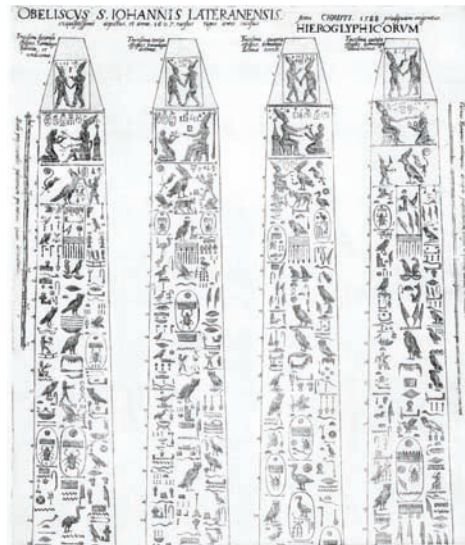


Fig. 8 The top of the Lateran Obelisk depicted in the *Thesaurus Hieroglyphicorum* of Herwath von Hohenburg

eye as meaning God, a vulture as nature, a circle as time and an ox as peace, saying: “(autumant) suum autem adnotandi genus, quo istic Aegyptii uterentur, toto orbe terrarum a peritis viris, quibus solis dignissimae res communicandae sint, per facile posse interpretari”. [(They affirm) that the kind of writing which the Egyptians used here could easily be interpreted by scholars throughout the world who alone are worthy of sharing such things]. According to the author, the predecessors of the Egyptians had the custom of decorating tombs with such signs a custom that had subsequently been generally adopted, of which Alberti gives many examples including the stele for the cynic Diogenes that appears to bear the image of a dog and the tomb of Archimedes identified by Cicero amid the ruins of Syracuse from the cylinder and the sphere which crowned the gravestone. Furthermore, the triple crown on top of the stone sculpture of the mother of Simandius, the Egyptian king, alluded to her status as his daughter, wife and mother, while the gesture of clapping which was recorded on the portrait of the Assyrian king Sardanapalus commemorated his joyful view of life. Finally, he concluded by writing that the Romans liked to portray the exploits of their illustrious men “Hinc columnae, hinc arcus triumphales, hinc porticus referti picta sculptave historia!” [Hence the columns, the triumphal arches, the galleries filled with history in pictures or sculpture!].

Alberti seems to have interpreted the hieroglyphs for his young friends in Florence and, previously, for his papal patron, given that the definitive text of his work is not very different

from the first draft. It is no coincidence that the limited number of Egyptian signs in his work clearly indicates a period in which Alberti knew only the hieroglyphs of Macrobius,^x and Ammianus and still did not know those reported by Diodorus.⁹

^x For the hieroglyphs of Macrobius see ch. 2 nt. 7 above.

This digression on hieroglyphics is interesting because it shows the importance of Alberti for teachers and artists and how the thirst for knowledge which only a humanist could feel before these mysterious signs was demonstrated by this versatile genius. His ideas were in fact the result of wide and challenging reading and a lively exchange of ideas, but above all of direct observation. So it was that his views on hieroglyphs ended up influencing the research of the time and also crucially inspiring that of the future.

At an early age Alberti had read the *Asclepius* of Hermes Trismegistus and was convinced that Egyptian painting and sculpture along with their religion had been born long before the Greeks had begun to create works of art. In adulthood, he was a close friend of Marsilio Ficino, with whom he used to spend days in the solitude of the forest of Camaldoli.¹⁰ Assuming that at the time Marsilio had seen the Horapollo in connection with his studies of Plato, then it is certain that Alberti knew of Ficino's intention to interpret Egyptian works philosophically. However this should not have affected Alberti's view of hieroglyphics which must have been formed as a result of reading Ammianus and Macrobius although Diodorus could have had little influence on him. Horapollo, Diodorus, and the classical authors generally, were in fact the only evidence about the enigmatic system of Egyptian priestly writing upon which was based their consensus on such evidence. For Alberti there was therefore no reason to add more hieroglyphs to those already provided by Ammianus and Macrobius, since they were already sufficient for what he had suggested, namely that this script was primarily for artists. On the other hand, he fails to cite any examples of the use of hieroglyphics in the artistic field which he had come to know during the writing of

⁹ Tory cit., fol. CXXIII. Alberti writes: "Notas litterarum majores aere inauratas marmoribus affigebant. Aegyptii signis utebantur hunc in modum. Nam oculo deum, vulture naturam, ape regem, ciclo tempus, bove pacem et ejusmodi significabant".

¹⁰ See H. Janitschek, 'Leone Battista Albertis kleine kunsttheontische Schriften', *Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte*, Vienna 1888, p. 92: "The Judge Trismagisto, a most ancient writer, who together with religion gave birth to pictures and sculpture"; see also G. Mancini, *Vita dil. B. Alberti*, Florence 1882, p. 481.

his work."¹¹ This is how the absence of the hieroglyphs quoted by Diodorus can be explained, despite the fact that Alberti often cited this text.

The author therefore interprets these scripts as figured signs which refer to a particular word, to a name or an idea or even to a series of thoughts. Thus he does not speak of Egyptian letters, but rather of "signa Aegypti".

This unique interpretation of Egyptian writing, the truth of which the dogmatic authority of the classical sources did not allow any doubt, was naturally compared with other similar examples in the fields of literature and art. The lack of critical sense in the approach to the classical authors, and the utter inability to judge the style of a classical work, an inexperience that Alberti shared with his time, would certainly lead a scholar to take this path, especially as he considered Egypt to be the fatherland of the arts and other peoples to be simple imitators. Thus he came to identify the hieroglyphs, as Ammianus had understood them, not only as symbols of the Egyptians but even as those of the Assyrians, Greeks and Romans. It is also worth mentioning that he conceived free-standing sculptures in this same way, sculptures such as the mother of the Egyptian monarch, Simandius, and that of Sardanapalus, provided they evoked a particular concept through an attribute or a gesture. Alberti therefore used the term hieroglyph in a wide and literal sense for such symbolic sculptures. Thus it was from interpreting the references, put in the mouths of Egyptians but that he himself subscribed to, that he believed that anyone experienced in the relevant issues – that is in the mysteries of symbolism – would not have difficulty in deciphering the Egyptian system of signs. It is possible that here Alberti has in mind Ciriaco whose interpretation of the hieroglyphs had been praised by Marsuppini in the hexameters mentioned earlier. It cannot therefore be excluded that the examples of Egyptian script which were brought to Florence and the interpretations of Ciriaco convinced Alberti that he could decipher these mysterious signs.

Apart from this mistaken belief, Alberti has the undoubted merit of having followed the classical tradition of interpreting

¹¹ H. Simandius shows that Alberti had used Poggio's translation of the text of Diodorus; for the citation of Sardanapalus he had used that of Strabo which Gregorio di Città di Castello completed in 1454 for Nicholas V (released in 1471) and the Basel edition of 1523 (p. 462), see Voigt cit., vol. II, pp. 188 ff.

hieroglyphics without succumbing to the temptation of resorting to medieval symbolism. Moreover, the classical tradition was so rich that Alberti – although he knew of hundreds and hundreds of preserved hieroglyphs on the obelisks, the Sphinx, the lions and other ancient monuments – could nourish the hope, thanks to this ancient symbology, of finding a proper interpretation for each sign. In any case, if he was unable to do this, Alberti always had a convenient final solution: to further expand the interpretation. So he read, for example the eye and the ox, both taken from Macrobius, as symbols of divinity and peace.

The humanists had thus started to translate the hieroglyphs in a similar way to that which, almost a century later, the scholar Pierio Valeriano realized should be based on much wider scholarship. Thus, the principles of interpretation were defined and settled as a result of the discovery of Horapollon and Ammianus. The only later change would be procedural steps: depending on the inclination of the interpreter the only sources were to be Egyptian or medieval allegories. What would not change would be the wish to analyze, since there arose everywhere a fresh and enthusiastic thirst for knowledge. Indeed, the prospect of being able, through the decipherment of hieroglyphs, to capture the most ancient philosophical foundations and the first historical traces of mankind, was all too tempting a prospect.

The brief excursus of Alberti did not address such issues since the *De re Aedificatoria* had only concrete aims. But this is what gives his discussion of hieroglyphics particular importance. Also although during his lifetime Alberti had avoided publishing this research, it was known by and enjoyed a great reputation amongst many artists and scholars. Any details of this work, which could have been lost because there was no direct knowledge of the text, were, however, offset by the lively personality of its author. The latter, true to his wish to seek the greatest possible contact with scholars, poets and orators, never avoided, although sometimes he loved solitude, having in Rome and Florence a direct relationship with artists and their lives, a relationship which, either directly or through his writing, was aimed at improving the social and intellectual conditions of the time. After his death in 1472, the treatise on architecture was transcribed several times, and already by 1483 a manuscript must have been in Padua, since in that year a copy was completed for the Duke of Urbino, Guidobaldo da Montefeltro. The Este codex with the arms of Hungary is dated from the same period. The example given to Lorenzo de Medici, copied by

Bernardo, the brother of Leon Battista, was printed for the first time in Florence in 1485.¹² From this moment, the influence of the work spread in ever wider circles to Germany and France. Alberti was seen as the Florentine Vitruvius and thanks to this fame his views on hieroglyphics were in turn revealed.

Alberti had always found useful the exchange of ideas between artists and scholars since these last could provide the primary material for new projects and the necessary support “ad bello componere sua storia”, [more beautifully to compose a story]. He expressed this belief in his treatise on painting particularly after he had highlighted the ability of poets and orators to grasp poetic images. The author believed that a “story” was worthy of praise when it exhibited a large number of characters, animals, buildings and other things related to the representation. With this, the author was referring not only to historical representations which embodied an over-simplistic concept of a “story” or of “history” but also the elaboration of a mythological-allegorical or symbolic composition.^{x1}

^{x1} See Alberti, *De Pictura* Part III.

In 1436 when he was still in Florence and was about to finish the Italian translation of his book on painting and not being at the time part of Niccolò's inner circle, Alberti did not need to emphasize the importance of the symbolism of the hieroglyphs.¹³ Later he would add copies of the inscriptions on the pyramids which were sent by Ciriaco and which he had amongst other things dedicated to Florence. These must have aroused the interest of Alberti in hieroglyphics. Convinced that they could be deciphered, even that some of them could easily be understood by educated people, both attracted by their possible use as decoration and inspired above all by the fact that this sort of decoration was preferred by the Romans, he recommended strongly in *De re aedificatoria* that artists of the time should copy these Egyptian characters.

Artists should behave like the Egyptians, he wrote, and attribute to hieroglyphs only the most important concepts. This

¹² See Mancini cit., p. 392. Dr. M. Dvorak has personally looked at the year and place of publication (Padua), indicated on the manuscript of Urbino but it gives no indication as to the origin of the original. I thank Dr. Dvorak for his efforts.

¹³ See Janitschek cit., *della pittura libra tre*, pp. 117 and 147. For the concept of history, see Dürer's letter from Venice to Pirckheimer of 18 August 1506, K. Lange and F. Fuhse, *Dürers schriftlicher Nachlass*, Halle 1893, p. 32, n. See also the signature on the Burgkmair woodcut, which represents the imperial eagle (Passavant III 281,120; ill. in J. v. Schlosser, ‘Giusto's Fresken in Padua und die Vorläufer der Stanza della Segnatura’, *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, XVII (1896, p. 71).

necessarily presupposed a relationship with scholars, who, if they wanted to express their ideas through hieroglyphs, should resort to artists. Led by Alberti, who was both an artist and a scholar, the humanists began to express themselves by means of images of things (rebus) rather than by words. And so, deriving from these enigmatic signs there arose the term “rebus”, puzzles which were to decorate medals, columns, triumphal arches and many other Renaissance works of art.^{xii}

☞ *The hieroglyphs of the humanists and medieval symbols*

Based on this interpretation of hieroglyphics, as the preferred intellectual expression of antiquity, even contemporary allegories, and in particular animal symbolism, was vested with a classical patina. After it had become a widespread practise to attribute the institutions and religious beliefs of the time to phenomena connected to the customs and myths of antiquity and then illustrate them accordingly, humanists soon realized that existing literature and art had great symbolic richness which, despite Christianity, had retained all the characteristics that, according to the statements of Ammianus and Diodorus, were attributed to the characters of ancient Egyptian writing.

The fifteenth century loved to make use of extracts from Latin texts, from Italian folk-tales and from stories taken from medieval bestiaries and the encyclopedias and also to interpret them with an allegorical and moral significance as ethical and religious concepts often fantastically symbolized by animals, plants and stones. And this did not happen only in scientific treatises in Latin but also in popular works in the vernacular of which many manuscripts have been preserved, among which I remember the one begun in Siena around 1460 that stands out for its exquisite designs, and the one by Messer Andrea Venturi, completed in Venice in 1468 which is characterized by its abundance of moralizing allegories.^{14,xiii} The lack of erudition of the compilers can be explained by the fact that in these bestiaries they did not take advantage of the rediscovery of classical literature in this period.

What is striking is that even Leonardo da Vinci devoted some of his interests, which as we know were manifold, to this literary field consulting just Pliny and Solinus,^{xiv} references to whom he may have even taken from a bestiary.^{xv} The hypothesis that the bestiary of Leonardo, from which important writ-

^{xii} It is surprising that Giehlow does not make more of this reference to the rebus which can properly be defined as a script in which pictures are used in place of letters, syllables or words or where a homonym is substituted for a word so that the meaning is disguised. As he says (page 15 above) this is indeed how the Renaissance understood the nature of the hieroglyph. Pirckheimer's own attempt at a language of rebuses is depicted in Appendix 9. The literary rebus was popular in the Renaissance from the *Poliphili* itself to the *Rondeaux d'Amour* in the *Opera Jocunda* of J. G. Alioni of 1521, a poem written in rebuses (see *Poésies Françaises de J. G. Alioni*, Paris: Silvestre, 1836), to the *Cestus Sapphicus* by Nils Thomasson from 1661, a wedding poem in thirty-one stanzas of which every word had at least one syllable printed as a picture. The best contemporary account of the rebus is given by Etienne Tabourot in his *Les Bigarrures et Touches du Seigneur des Accords*, Paris: Maucroy, 1662 in the chapter on the *Rebus de Picardie*. See also Jean Céard, *Rebus de la Renaissance; des images que parlent*, Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1986.

^{xiii} According to Goldstaub and Wendriner the name of the author of this manuscript is Andrea Vituri. This book is an excellent source for manuscripts of and information on the bestiaries.

^{xiv} Gaius Julius Solinus probably from the middle of the fourth century CE was the author of *De mirabilibus mundi* which also went by the name *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* or *Polyhistor*. It was in turn largely derived from Pliny.

^{xv} Leonardo's own bestiary can be found in Edward Maccurdy's *Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939, vol II pp. 469 ff.

¹⁴ Goldstaub and Wendriner cit., p. 74. The digression on Leonardo is on pp. 240 ff.

^{xvi} The phrase “ut pictura poesis” of course goes back long before Leonardo to Horace and Aristotle.

^{xvii} Books of *exempla* were books of moral tales used by preachers during the Middle Ages and Renaissance to enliven their sermons or illustrate their text. They employed stories from many other sources than just the *Physiologus*.

^{xviii} See also ch. 1 nt. xxxiv for details on the *Physiologus* and p. 6 above where Giehlow indicates that the *Physiologus* cannot provide an adequate explanation of animal symbolism.

^{xix} The Books of Nature included the Bestiaries, Volucaries and Herbals and copies of Konrad von Megenburg's *Buch der Natur*, written c. 1350 of which there are said to be more than one hundred manuscripts. One of these, Cod. Pal. germ. 300, can be seen at [http://diglit.lib.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg300/\(10/17/2017\)](http://diglit.lib.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg300/(10/17/2017)). More generally the Book of Nature, containing the creation and the creatures of God, competed with that other great book, the Scriptures, in revealing His nature. Thus “God has given us two books: the Book of the Universal Order of Things (or, of Nature) and the Book of the Bible. The former was given to us first, from the origin of the world: for each creature is like a letter traced by the hand of God”. English translation by M. A. Screech from the French of Montaigne in Raymundi de Sabunde's Introduction to his *Theologia Naturalis* Venice: Zibetum, 1581.

ers like Ammianus, Diodorus and Strabo are completely absent, should be regarded as an early work seems much more plausible in view of the fact that at a later date Leonardo also seems to have evinced a strong interest in the study of hieroglyphs as shown by the rebuses kept at Windsor. In this context a particular significance must be assumed in the idea expressed by Leonardo in his book on painting (finished on 23 April 1490) according to which painting must have been the “source” of the invention of the characters of the hieroglyphic script. Such an observation leads us to think that Leonardo knew hieroglyphics as an expression of the oldest figurative writing, especially since just before the quoted passage one reads: “Painting is mute poetry and poetry is blind painting”.^{15,xvi} This reflects the thinking already expressed by Alberti, who had argued that the painters had to turn to the poets to give full significance to those allegorical compositions in which animals and plants seemed to be endowed with intrinsic meaning.

Whether it was the bestiaries, books of *exempla*^{xvii} or encyclopaedic treatises that Leonardo used for his artistic purposes, the fact is that they all looked back to a single common source, namely the so-called *Physiologus*. I have previously described the extent to which this “instructional book”, written in Alexandria as a tool in the struggle against paganism, was intended to help newcomers towards a different interpretation of those Egyptian symbols and signs closely linked to pagan cults, seeking to present a typological interpretation of nature whether animated or not. The *Physiologus* as a whole, with its references to Egyptian tradition – in part recovered, in part modified – such as the characteristics of various animals, the lion, beaver, hoopoe, pelican and phoenix^{16,xviii} had very considerable influence in the Middle Ages so that the symbolism known to the humanists came to be imbued with Egyptian elements.

Although humanists interested in the study of antiquity had omitted the symbols on the Romanesque and Gothic buildings, they were ubiquitous in literature, all the more so since the young art of printing disseminated the written tradition through the “Books of Nature”.^{17,xix} Then when the texts of the

¹⁵ Leonardo da Vinci, ‘Das Buch der Malerei’, *Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte*, XV, Wien 1882 p. 36.

¹⁶ See Lauchert cit., in which for the one part he emphasizes the coincidence between the animals cited and the Egyptian information, in particularly Horapolo, and on the other he disputes the origin of this last text; see above ch. 1 nt. 33.

¹⁷ See V. Carus, *Geschichte der Zoologie bis auf Job. Müller und Ch. Darwin*, Munich: 1872, p. 265.

classical authors, and in particular that of Horapollo, awakened interest in hieroglyphics, everywhere in the Renaissance there were to be found these two literary works with the same spirit, one fresh as a result of its millenary sleep, the other which had become almost unrecognizable as a result of multiple transformations by religion, superstition, custom and usage. But the intimate relationship between the two was still apparent and this link was the underlying reason why the humanist movement continued its research into hieroglyphics.

Moreover this view was reinforced by the frequent use of symbols in heraldry, which found similarities in the ancient custom of the Egyptians reported by Diodorus and Eusebius of decorating their helmets and military insignia with symbols of animals. A similar practice associated badges with slogans and images with mottos; the allegorizing spirit of the Middle Ages never seemed to get enough of all these and any variation of this practice, influenced by antiquity, nevertheless remained sufficiently stable to facilitate the dissemination of this conception of the hieroglyphs.

To the extent that every prince began to visualize the ancient classical kingdoms as a model for his ideal state, the fashion even developed of imitating the mottos which were sometimes provided by classical authors. In this connection we may recall the one of Augustus described by Aulus Gellius in *Attic Nights*.¹⁸ It was a natural hypothesis to assume that there should be associated with these mottos the symbols and allegories present on imperial coins, the interpretation of which by the scholars of the court developed into an activity that no courtier could ignore. What better opportunity could there be to flatter your patron than to help him choose his motto! As it was for the prince, so the scholar was motivated to invent his own motto, and this obsession with the desire for fame soon spread so that all important people sought to have not only their image but even their own motto inscribed on a medal. In this way the formal character of the classical age, increasingly taken as a model, became more and more widespread.

The use of elements taken from the Middle Ages developed much later. Humanists interested in hieroglyphics were convinced that ancient symbolism was derived from the Egyptian practice of writing with images. As they were devoid of any sense of style, they had even less hesitation in believing that

¹⁸ See Erasmus, *Adagiorum chiliades ac centuriae fere totidem*, Basileae 1513, p. 112, on the subject of Augustus.

the innumerable depictions of animals, plants, tools, symbols and allegories on ancient coins were hieroglyphs. In fact, this belief contributed to the conquest of Egypt and the spread of the cult of Isis in Rome, so that the imperial coins came to portray more and more of these symbolic elements and deities.¹⁹ In allegorical numismatics a new trend became apparent; following the model of these coins, humanists who were interested in hieroglyphics consciously tried to incorporate their own motto on a medal, taking advantage of the ones they believed to be the signs from Egyptian writing, thus combining the mysteries with the ancient wisdom of that people.

This explains the proliferation of sophisticated and obscure allegories on the medals of Bologna, Ferrara and Padua, for which Friedländer has tried to justify this abundant frequency as a result of a not very well defined development of the taste of the scholars of the time.²⁰ In short, mottos became enigmatic Egyptian images which in turn were transformed into hieroglyphs.

☞ *Hieroglyphs on the Medals of the Quattrocento*

If we consider from this point of view the numismatic heritage preserved in the *Quattrocento*, we must also remember that the hieroglyphs were a kind of refined rarity that was reserved for more educated people during the entire fifteenth century, and particularly during the first half of it. Medieval symbolism and the early rediscovery of ancient allegory especially when religious influences are taken into account offered sufficient material to elaborate the more cryptic forms of symbolism without anyone who was capable of deciphering them knowing that they were intended to portray hieroglyphs. Not all mysterious allegories would therefore necessarily reflect a direct interest in hieroglyphics. However, if a medal could be linked to an environment where an interest in these studies had been cultivated, it must be assumed that such mystery reflected an intention to create a hieroglyphic enigma. This happened for example in the case of the Academies of Bologna, Ferrara and Padua. Even in the absence of evidence that testifies to the influence of

¹⁹ On this interpretation, see Antonii Augustinus, Archbishop of Taragon, *Antiquitatum Romanarum Hispanicarumque in nummis veterum dialogi XI*, Antwerp 1653, p. 14. Augustinus was born in Zaragoza on 25 March 1517 and arrived in Bologna in 1535, where he heard Alciato. Afterwards he went to Rome, where he was *auditor votae* in 1545. See G. Zoega, *Nummi aegyptii imperatorii (prostantes in Museo Borgiano)*, Romae 1787.

²⁰ Friedländer cit, II (1881), p. 35.

scholars, there are nevertheless characteristics that allow us to identify the deliberate use of these signs of Egyptian script. And all this is the case not only when they appear in the allegory of the Nile and the unique aspects of its symbolism but also and especially when a motto is rendered literally thanks to particular images. The later the medal, the more the suggestion can be advanced that a symbol is intended to give shape to a hieroglyph precisely because of the increasing interest in this form. These external criteria and content are obvious, singly or in relation to each other, in the following examples.^{xx}

^{xx} The close relationship between coins and medals from antiquity and devices, emblems and the *Iconologia* of Cesare Ripa is reviewed in the extensive examination of Sonia Maffei in *Le Radici Antiche dei Simboli* Naples: La Stanza delle Scritture, 2009 pp. 87-299.



Fig. 9 Obverse of the Medal of Leon Battista Alberti from A. Heiss, *Les Médailleurs de la Renaissance*, *Série 1883*, Pl. 21.

A typical case is Alberti's medal, modeled by Matteo de' Pasti (see fig. 9). His motto, the Ciceronian "Quid tum" [What next]^{xxi} was initially portrayed with an eagle,²¹ which is also found in the final version of the Italian translation of Alberti's book on painting dated July 17, 1436 and dedicated to his friend Brunelleschi. As already mentioned, Alberti was at a later stage attracted to those hieroglyphs which he sought to interpret on the basis of the classical authors and in this context, he certainly knew a seal of the Egyptian late period, probably of Gnostic origin, bearing the symbol of a winged eye similar to that in lapis lazuli reproduced here (see fig. 10).²² The image that accompanies the "Quid Tum" on the medal of Matteo is inspired by this model so that, by reference to Diodorus, he

^{xxi} Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, II.11.26.

²¹ Heiss cit., pl. 21, and Janitschek cit., p. V.

²² The impression in tin, which is taken from the attached picture, we owe to the kindness of Prof. J. Springer of the Imperial Museum in Berlin, for whom much gratitude is owed for the other photographs. In respect of the bibliography for the seal see Joh. Winckelmann cit, p. 240, and *Dactyllotheke Stoschiana, mit Erläuterungen von F. Schlichtegroll*, vol. II, Nurnberg 1805, pl. I, no. 2.

xxii The symbolism of Alberti's medal is discussed in Edgar Wind *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance* New York: Norton, 1968 pp. 231-235 where he quotes Giehlow approvingly. He says in the words of Alberti "We are admonished . . . to conceive of God as ever present. . . . At the same time we are also reminded that we must be vigilant and circumspect". For further bibliographic references, see Curran, 2007, p. 316 nt. 50.

interprets the eye as "justitiae servator" [preserver of justice], the flight of the sparrow as "res cito facta" [things done quickly], and the two together as the ever-present possibility of being called before the judgement of God. It therefore expresses symbolically a warning to be ever mindful of what can happen "in the after-life", and, as we shall discuss below, it does not refer to the erudition of Alberti.^{xxii}

To what extent this captures the meaning given by the ancient symbol is something that must be judged by specialists. In any case, his interpretation can be compared with that of Winckelmann who understood the symbol on the lapis lazuli in this way: the eye is prudence and the wings, together with the hand, represent the speed that accompanies the intellectual performance of a project. But Alberti did not know the passage in which Herodotus says that the Egyptian writing runs from right to left, or he would not have copied the symbol in the opposite direction. For someone who was a prisoner of the western conception of art in which flight is depicted with wings stretched upward, such a portrayal seemed obvious. Indeed, the whole Egyptian style was translated this modern manner and we are faced with a further example of the lack of stylistic understanding by which even some Roman sculptures were considered hieroglyphs.



Fig. 10 Gnostic Seal, Lapis Lazuli, in the Egyptian wing of the Royal Museums of Berlin

xxiii Vittorino da Feltre (1378–1446) founded a school in Mantua which was attended by the sons of many of the nobility of Italy including Federico da Montefeltro.

The patrons of Urbino were in contact with most of the major scholars. At the time of Federico Montefeltro, Flavio Biondo was staying at that court and it was really on his initiative that the *De re aedificatoria* was copied in Padua although the manuscript was only completed a year after his death. The lord of Urbino, a student of the famous Vittorino da Feltre,^{xxiii} seems to have had a special fondness for figurative writing. The

motto, “Mars ferus et summum tangens Cytherea tonantem dant tibi regna pares et tua fata movent”, [Fierce Mars and the Cytherean Venus, in conjunction with the most high god of Thunder, contribute equally to your power and influence your destiny], on the edge of the reverse of his medal, created in October 1468 by Clemens Urbinas, is repeated literally by the symbolic images on the medal (see fig 11).²³ Not knowing the cultural movement that was obsessed by hieroglyphics, Friedländer ignored the close relationship between word and image, and interpreted this figure as an allegory of war and peace, but was unable to explain the meaning of the brush as a symbol of the latter. It is clear that this is not the correct interpretation, since it is an attribute of Venus, just as the myrtle that envelops it, is the trophy of Mars. Previously this object was interpreted as a weight, since Friedländer did not correctly understand it as an object of toiletry: a round brush similar to that used by Dürer in a youthful design that represented the toilet of a woman. This he later recalled in a letter to Pirckheimer referred to a beauty of Nuremberg. Even the narrow and indistinct object in the claws of the eagle is not a crown, but a thunderbolt, the usual attribute of a bird of prey, denoting the *summus tonans*. It did not escape Friedländer that the sphere signifies the Earth, while the stars allude to Jupiter, Mars and Venus, and indeed that these symbols were intended to express “regna”, [kingdom] and “tua fata movent”, [influence your destiny]. A refinement of particular importance is expressed in the thought that reserves for Mars and Venus an equal influence on the fate of Frederico: Venus is in conjunction with Jupiter, which hints at the planets depicted in the constellation, while the attributes of Mars and Venus are placed on a kind of axis or beam tangent to the eagle. A balance thus results, to which is added the celestial globe located exactly in the center of the axis. Only the word “dant” is laid iconographically in the direction of both the sword and the link between the myrtle and the terrestrial sphere. In short, Frederico and his court humanists did not shy away from complexity and subtlety and so many things are piled up in this image that the meaning of the hieroglyphs would hardly be intelligible in detail without the text accompanying the images.^{xxiv}

Unfortunately, the reverse of the medal that Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, son of Louis III and Barbara of Hohenzollern,

^{xxiv} For further interpretation of the medal see Wind cit., pp. 95-96. According to G. F. Hill, ‘The Roman Medallists of the Renaissance’, *Papers of the British School at Rome*, IX. 2. (1920) p. 25, this medal was copied, at least as to the portrait, from an earlier medal of Alfonso the Magnanimous of Aragon by Cristoforo di Geremia from 1458. On the reverse Alfonso is shown with an orb and scepter supported by Mars and Bellona. This medal is illustrated in S. K. Scher *The Currency of Fame*. New York, 1994 p. 118. #35.

²³ See Friedländer cit., III (1882), p. 192.

Fig. 11 Obverse of the Medal of Federigo of Montefeltro



^{xxv} That is, he had received the purple mantle of a bishop.

had engraved by his countryman, Sperandio, lacks any text. Thanks to his family background, Francesco had enjoyed a brilliant career in the church; only 17 years old in 1461, he obtained the purple,^{xxv} then five years later was appointed bishop of Mantua. In 1471 he had come to Bologna as Legate, later in 1476, seven years before his death, to be made bishop of that city. Francesco had a thorough education and in the artistic environment of the court had frequented the company of people who passionately pursued the study of hieroglyphics: Alberti had built the church of St. Andrew in 1460 and in 1472 Angelo Poliziano, the noted Florentine scholar and poet, commemorated the feasts of Gonzaga with his poems on Orpheus.

A passionate collector of gems, bronzes and medals, Cardinal Francesco did not fail to be honored with a medal from the circle of scholars in Bologna. As can be seen both from the text above the portrait on the obverse – “liberalitatis ac Romanae ecclesiae jubar” [luminary of generosity and the Roman church] – and by the mature facial features, this most likely happened in the years when he was cardinal legate.²⁴ The meaning of the allegory on the reverse of the medallion (see fig. 12) has long been discussed, and it is difficult to make a literal rendering of the motto which it refers to in the absence of an authentic interpretation. Nevertheless, it is possible to grasp the basic idea by analyzing the meaning of its parts.

Neither Friedländer nor Heiss managed to identify the animal depicted or to clarify the meaning of the weapons and the armor reflected in the clouds. Regarding the animal, Friedländer believed it to be a panther, but Heiss thought it a lynx. According to the latter, the arms in the sky allude to spiritual weapons, while the former limited himself to defining them as

²⁴ See Friedländer cit., II (1881), p. 42 and A. Heiss, pp. 42 ff.

Fig. 12 Obverse of the Medal
of Cardinal Francesco
Gonzaga



a reflection of those found on earth, without attempting to explain this strange phenomenon in more detail.

Pierio Valeriano provides us with a valuable comment in this context:²⁵ as a result of its visual acuity, the lynx is in fact a hieroglyph depicting a man “qui maxime visu polleret” [who has the greatest sight]. Indeed, according to some, the animal could see through mountains because it could detect the image of the most distant objects which were hidden by the mountains but reflected in the highest layers of the atmosphere similar to the phenomenon by which in certain circumstances we can discern a coin at the bottom of a container of water due to the reflection that appears on the surface. This was characteristic of the way that attempts were made to justify with physical arguments such fantastic stories as those reported by Albert Neckam,^{xxvi} Thomas de Catimpré and Brunetto Latini, who referred to the sharp vision of the lynx that enabled it to penetrate nine walls²⁶ and other solid bodies. That explanation

^{xxvi} Presumably Giehlow means Alexander of Neckam (1157–1217) an English scholar and teacher.

²⁵ Valeriano cit., pp. 85 ff.: “De lynce acutissimus obtutus. Nonnulli igitur, cum lynce omnium quadrupedum clarissime cernere considerassent, hominem qui visu maxime polleret significaturi, animal id hieroglyphicum posuere. Sane multi eas affirmant convexa etiam montium visu penetrare; neque defuere philosophi qui fieri posse hoc commentati sunt ex imagine, quae certo ab terrarum spatio summo in aere pendeat, quam lynx, utpote quae sit oculo admodum defaecato, intueatur. Cujus rei exemplum experimur dejecto in earum aliquod vas nummo, quem, tametsi longe recesserimus, simulac vas aqua expletum fuerit, intuemur, fundo etiam ipsius vasis in aquae superficie se ostentante, quippe rerum earum radiis in aquae summum sese exporrigentibus ea ibi species redditur, quae aqua inde subducta, vasculi curvitate intercipitur, ac ne videri possit praepeditur”. As can be seen, the medieval interpretation has been strongly preserved. It is exhaustively illustrated by Goldstaub and Wendriner cit., p. 202.

²⁶ This story is reported by Neckam in his *De Rerum Natura* from the early 13th century. A copy of this medal is in the British Museum and was displayed in the exhibition of Italian medals in 1893.

must have been endorsed at the time by the circle of scholars from Bologna, and therefore would have seemed particularly suitable for its use as a symbol for the medal of the Cardinal. Here the object that the lynx looks at is a pyramid or even an obelisk, since at that time these two forms and their meanings were frequently interchanged. What it was intended to signify is clearly indicated by the inscription “enigmata”, as Heiss was the first to remark, correcting the reading “poem” which had been suggested by Friedländer. But there is no reason to infer, as does Heiss, following the then current view of the pyramid as a tomb, that it alludes to the death of the cardinal, thus dating the medal after 1483. The highest recognition that could be attributed to a scholar’s learning at the time was that he understood hieroglyphs as depositories of the most profound philosophical thought. The “enigmata”, visible on the obelisk, was therefore what Ciriaco claimed to have found on the pyramids. From the symbolic point of view, Gonzaga’s medal is an allusion to the acuteness of intellect of a scholar who was also at the same time a leader and who at a time when he could properly attain to the highest knowledge did not hesitate also to make use of hidden weapons. All this is in fact consonant with the role of a cardinal legate, who in a turbulent city like Bologna needed to possess particular political and military virtues, an ambivalence which is underscored by Heiss.

What makes this hieroglyph so interesting is that they used a medieval symbology in a new sense. A similar process can also be found on the reverse of a medal of the Doge Baptista Fulgoso (see fig. 13), issued in Genoa between 1478 and 1483 which was attributed to Baptista Elias de Janua. The energy and imagination of the Republic of Genoa was tepid compared to the scientific ferment that shook the rest of Italy.²⁷ But think of the date, already well advanced, when the coin was minted, what we have seen of animals marking the typical Egyptian inscriptions which are represented here and the translation of the image into words. There are thus several reasons to believe that in this case also the intention was to write in hieroglyphs. In Genoa, the prior of the convent of the Dominicans was Giovanni of Viterbo, a man of great erudition, whose studies on hieroglyphs I will discuss shortly. It is likely that the latter served as a consultant to the Doge as a poet, seeing that he was

²⁷ See Friedländer cit., vol. III (1882), pp. 193 to 194; on Fulgoso or Fregoso see G. Tiraboschi, *Storia della letteratura Italiana*, Venice 1824, vol. VI, bk. III, pp. 105 and 149.

Fig. 13 Obverse of the Medal
of Genoese Doge Baptista
Fulgoso



then in contact with Fulgoso as evidenced by the fact that he spent the rest of his life in the service of Cardinal Paolo de Campo Fulgoso. Even the man who coined the medal, Baptista Elias, appears to have taken from Giovanni Nanni the fancy of believing that Genoa was founded by Janus and hence the name Janua.

Friedländer did not understand the meaning of the allegory. He did not identify the trochilus from the legend of the ichneumon already described by Pliny, Solinus and Brunetto Latini, in the figure of the bird that approaches the gaping jaws of the crocodile, nor did he recognize the Nile in the image of the water flowing nearby. This explains why he did not rule out a previous interpretation, namely that the crocodile must have symbolized Cardinal Paolo Fulgoso, who had exiled Baptista Elias. But if we consider the hieroglyphic significance of the symbolic image, we see that it is repeated in a marginal note, that is "Peculiaris audacia et victus" [of a special audacity and way of life]. The classical authors mentioned above in fact relate that the trochilus would fly into the jaws of a crocodile sleeping on the banks of the Nile for a meal to satisfy his hunger.^{28,xxvii} Thus an animal legend already known in medieval times, was ultimately transformed into a hieroglyph which evoked the concepts of courage and profit.

After an interval of a millenium, therefore, we find on the

xxvii Richter has been brought uptodate by Maccurdy; see nt. xv above. Da Vinci in this extract (1259) describes the ichneumon or mongoose as killing the crocodile itself while it slept rather than just destroying its eggs as was more commonly believed.

²⁸ See Goldstaub and Wendriner cit., pp. 131.2, 335.4, Pliny cit., bk. VIII, ch. XXV: "Hunc (crocodilum) satum cibo piscium et semper esculento ore, in litore somno datum, parva avis, quae trochilos ibi vocatur, rex avium in Italia, invitat ad hianum pabuli sui gratia, os primum ejus assaltim repurgans, mox dentes et intus fauces quoque ad hanc scabendi dulcedinem quam maxime hiantis". Even Leonardo adopted the legend of the trochilus and Icnemone; see J. P. Richter, *The literary works of Leonardo da Vinci*, vol. II, London 1883, p. 332.

medals of the fifteenth century the first attempts of the humanists to breathe new life into hieroglyphics. Today these studies, which were performed in some cases quite methodically and in others with fantastic improbability, can only be considered as merely a long sequence of errors. It might therefore seem unnecessary to ascribe the beginning of these studies to Valeriano, or even date it back a century earlier. Yet it is precisely this humanistic period to which the utmost importance must be ascribed for the evolution of modern thought, and knowledge of which is essential to understand modern art in particular. These humanistic studies of hieroglyphs involved one of the most sensitive issues, namely the relationship between artist and scholar and it is for this reason that the hieroglyphic studies of the Renaissance are so valuable. Of course, there are other medals which are a vast resource and provide scope for further investigation, but for the purposes here, I think the examples cited should suffice.

At a time when the humanists were trying to express their thoughts with great enthusiasm by means of what they thought of as hieroglyphs, they were driven by the desire to achieve a spiritual unity with the ancient world like that which had led them to write letters in Greek and Hebrew. This just shows their vanity and their desire for glory, since the hieroglyphs, by virtue of the universal intelligibility that was attributed to them, seemed designed specifically for this need. Nothing can be more representative of this passion than the suggestion of Alberti that only the most difficult and valuable matters capable of being understood should be entrusted to hieroglyphics, thus fulfilling his own motto, which was the most unique of his creations. As was the case with the hieroglyphs, even representations on medals bore witness to the principles of their authors, because the latter were convinced that any scholar could decipher them.

☞ *Fra Giovanni Nanni of Viterbo and the Hieroglyphs*

The desire to endure in the memory of posterity derived from involvement with the ancient world and the consequent development of individual consciousness. Closely linked to this was curiosity about genealogy. To go back to antiquity to investigate the origins of one's family was the common wish of all Italian humanists and in this context, the subordination of Roman civilization to the Greek was a delicate point for Italian pride. The humanists thus greeted with sympathy the information provided by ancient authors demonstrating the influ-

ence that the Egyptian had exercised over Greek culture and they wondered to what extent this culture could have directly influenced Italy. The oldest hieroglyphs and inscriptions provided hope that clarification of this issue could be reached and it was thus that the humanists began to view these hieroglyphs and inscriptions as the foundation of historical research and to place them in the service of national pride. It is not surprising then that the desired solution was actually achieved. The scholar able to carry out this sort of sleight of hand was Giovanni Nanni of Viterbo – Joannes Annius Viterbensis^{xxviii} – who, in a way very damaging for his own scientific reputation, shared the passion that was common in this humanistic environment. His approach to the reading of Egyptian script, as it is related in the *Commentaria de Antiquitatibus* which Annius gave to posterity, is not just a typical example of the quattrocento interest in hieroglyphics but also a psychological problem for humanism overall.²⁹ Thus we have to deal with this author taking into consideration both his life and his work.

Annus' formative years were influenced by the strong relationships he had among those scholars who had been making amazing discoveries in classical literature in all its forms. Although the corpus of Latin authors had been substantially completed before the birth of the author, and despite the fact that the loss of Byzantium reduced access to what had been the main source of new discoveries of Greek authors, the thirst which had been awakened for new classical works full of information was not in the least sated. In fact, the desire to know those works mentioned in literary sources but which were still unknown remained unchanged and many were the *desiderata* that Pietrus Donatus had listed and that still remained unsatisfied.^{xxix}

xxviii For selected bibliographical references for Annus, see Curran, 2007, cit., p. 333 nt. 116.

xxix For more on the list of Donatus, see above ch. 2 nt. 33.

²⁹ J. Annus, *Antiquitatum variarum volumina XVII* Parisiis 1515: "A venerando et sacrae theologiae et predicatorii ordinis professore Jo. Annio hac serie declarata. Contentorum in aliis voluminibus liber primus. Institutio humanarum de aequivocis lib. II; Vertumniana Propertii lib. III; Xenophontis Aequivoca lib. IIII; Fabii Pictoris de aure saeculo lib. V; Myrsili lib. VI; Catonis fragmentum lib. VII; Itinerarii Antonini fragmentum lib. VIII; Sempronii de Italia lib. IX; Archilochi de temporibus lib. X; Metasthenis lib. XI; de Hispanis lib. XII; De chronographia Etrusca lib. XIII; Philonis lib. XIII; Berosi lib. XV; Manethonis lib. XVI; Anniarum XVI; quaestionum lib. XVII"; thereunder the mark of Jehan Petit; "Venundantur ab Joanne Parvo et Jodoco Badio". – Colophon: "Impressum rursus opera Ascensiana ad X Kalendas Octob. hunc salutis humanae 1515". This edition gives the following citation for its source - with regard to Annus see the essay of Wachler, in *Allgemeine Encyclopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste in der alphabetischen Folge von genannten Schriftstellern*, hr. sg. J. von Ersch - G. Gruber, Leipzig 1817 ff., where it indicates 1432 as year of his birth.

These gaps must have been all the more painful for Annius, who was driven from a young age to investigate the early ancient history of his home town, Viterbo, in the wake of the discoveries that were being made at the time in Etruria and which had revealed a very ancient civilization.³⁰ His in-depth studies, although limited by his lack of knowledge of Greek and which remained restricted to the Latin versions of Diodorus, Herodotus and Eusebius, earned him the dignity of a professorship, although they did not bring him the understanding he had hoped for. Annius noticed that the new information concerning the ancient history of humanity was in no way compatible with Genesis and with the information provided by Flavius Josephus of whom, both in his theology and his apologetics for the Chaldeans, he had been a faithful follower. Full of scorn rekindled by the reports of Diodorus about the Greeks and blinded by almost touching patriotism, Annius went so far as to falsify those authors from whom he had hoped to obtain the solution to the contradictions that he had identified. In the course of ceaseless activity, including a sermon in favor of the Crusades, the position he held in Genoa in the retinue of Cardinal Fulgosio and as a confidante of Alexander VI, he ended up using his intelligence and knowledge negatively, creating and commenting on not less than twelve texts by different authors including a Chaldean, an Egyptian, five Greeks and other Latin writers.

In no other humanistic work does there coexist in so singular a manner such a strong drive towards the acquisition of knowledge and yet one accompanied by a legacy of medieval prejudice and comprising such a strong and rigid orthodoxy. Yet, this aspect of his work is very interesting, because his drive towards historical and genealogical research was based particularly on the books of the Chaldean, Berosus,^{xxx} and on the related supplements compiled from the Egyptian, Manetho. Together, they cover no less a period than that from the Flood to the sack of Troy! Starting with Noah, identified with Janus, the family tree of all the kings and princes served to provide a better understanding of the events narrated by Berosus, which do not go beyond the foundation of the kingdom of Troy, and whose au-

^{xxx} Berosus was the Babylonian counterpart of Manetho (see ch. 2 nt. viii above). Berosus lived at the beginning of the third century BCE and wrote a history of his country, the *Babyloniaca*, History of Babylon, of which indirect fragments survive. Annius professed to have found several of the books of Berosus among which was a king-list which supplements such a list in the Bible. This element of Annius' forgeries has been frequently reprinted including in modern editions, e. g. *Commentaria & Editiones* A. F. W. Sommer, ed., Vienna: Selbstverlag, 2004. See also E. N. Tigerstedt 'Ioannes Annius and Graecia Mendax', *Classical, Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Honor of Berthold Louis Ullman*, ed. C. Henderson Jr. Rome: 1964, II, pp. 293-310.

³⁰ See the comments of Alberti on the Etruscan finds, *De re aedificatoria*, ed. Tory cit., fol. CXXIII: "... per Etruriam ex oppidorum ruinis et bustuariis defossa vidimus sepulchra litteris, uti omnes sibi persuadebant, inscripta Etruscis. Earum notae imitantur Graecas, imitantur etiam latinas, sed quid moneant, intelligit nemo". In his *Commentaria urbana*, Volterrano provides some examples of the Etruscan inscriptions which were discovered, see p. 1200 of the 1604 edition published by C. Mamiles.

thority is supported by a fragment from Cato according to which the “disciplina graeca comparatione Chaldaica tota est fabulositas et per totam vitam errare compellit”. [the whole field of Chaldaean scholarship is mythical and would require a life-time to investigate]. The falsification of Fabius Pictor takes account of topographical interest and even goes as far as providing a map of Rome in antiquity.^{xxxix} But like most other forgeries it served no other purpose ultimately than showing that the totality of Etruscan antiquity must be derived from Egypt. Obviously, the *gens Annia*, cited as one of the noblest families, could already be identified in this remote era.^{xxxix}

His colleagues claimed that Annius, a highly regarded person to whom, quite ironically, in 1499 there had been entrusted the chair of the censorship committee established by Alexander VI, had himself been the victim of deception. However, this view is contradicted by the particular accuracy of the matches that can be found among all these writers, although Annius said that he had bought the texts of Berossus and Manetho in Genoa from a fellow Armenian monk named Georgius and had tracked down the other works in a scholar's collection of about 1315 in Mantua, where he had accompanied the cardinal.³¹ Such deception demanded of Annius an extraordinary intellectual commitment; almost all the information on any one author is commented on and rendered plausible in relation to other authors, and confirmed by passages of similar content. The whole text therefore enjoyed a wide circulation since no single scholar realized the scope of the deception. This honor can be ascribed to Sabellico,^{xxxix} Crinito and Volterrano. On the other hand, the forgery of Annius was in line with widespread ambitions at the time and contributed to simplifying research among scholars less endowed with critical sense. It was received with great critical acclaim, particularly by the German and French humanists, since it emphasized the autonomy of their cultural evolution validated by this Egyptian influence.

³¹ On the alleged purchase of Berossus, see the beginning of the third book of Berossus in Annius cit., fol. CXIV^v where Annius claims to have received it from his Armenian countryman Georgius. His statement concerning the Armenians in Genoa (“Comi hospitio excepi”) makes the assumption that the purchase took place in Como, see R. Förster, *Francisco Zambeccari und die Briefe des Libanios*, Stuttgart 1878, p. 276. In a letter to his brother Tomaso, Annius cit, fol. CLIII, mentions the discovery of other fragments in Mantua during a trip “cum reverendissimo domino meo, domino Paulo de Campo Fulgoso, cardinali sancti Sixti”. Apparently, the fragments were edited by one Guillelmus.

xxxix Fabius Pictor was a Roman historian of the third century BCE who wrote in Greek. In his *Epitome of Viterbese History* of 1491-2, Annius rewrites the episode of the Rape of the Sabine Women using Pictor as his authority.

xxxix It should be noted that many Italian and German cities claimed foundation by mythical figures particularly those who had fought in the Trojan War and civic chronicles were written that evidenced this. Thus Padua was founded by Antenor, Benevento by Diomedes, Genoa by Janus, Zwickau by Cycnus. Pisa was not only founded by Pelops but Pisans actually aided the Greeks and, according to their chronicle, were responsible for the capture of Troy! Milan, not to be outdone, was founded by Jove himself. It is not surprising therefore that in such an environment the meticulously documented history of Annius would be widely accepted. The purpose of these fabrications was, in the case of Italy, to bolster political claims for independence from Rome and for the German cities for independence from the dominance of the great dynastic families. For Italian cities, see E. N. Tigerstedt cit., pp. 293-310 and for German cities, see Ernst Riegg *Town Chronicles in the Holy Roman Empire: Legitimacy and Historical Construction* at http://users.ox.ac.uk/~oaces/conference/papers/Ernst_Riegg.pdf. See also Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, Bollinger Series XXXVIII, Pantheon, pp. 19-26 for medieval and Renaissance texts describing the mythological origins of European peoples and cities.

xxxix See ch. 5 nt. 63 for more information on Sabellico and his *Enneads*.

^{xxxiv} A marble tablet now in the Civic Museum in Viterbo commemorating the supposed decree of King Desiderius to the effect that Viterbo was the capital of Etruria.

^{xxxv} As is stated in the Latin extract above, the "column" is not a column but a tablet which can still be seen in the Civic Museum in Viterbo. This is now believed to be dateable to the twelfth or thirteenth century and the two heads described by Giehlow are even later as is an inscription below the tablet.

Moreover, the presumed authenticity of these texts had been cleverly corroborated by Anniius himself, who tried to substantiate it all with false inscriptions, of which the best known was the *Decretum Desiderii*.^{xxxiv} But even the hieroglyphs, by which he wished to show the direct influence of Egyptian culture on Etruria and on Viterbo were specially conceived and produced by him.

As a typically obsessive patriot Anniius refers to a column that was said to have belonged to a temple dedicated to Hercules and was placed in front of the pulpit of San Lorenzo in Viterbo, a monument which was still attested to in the same position in the middle of the sixteenth century.^{32, xxxv} The sculptures of the column, described by Anniius as "*sacrae Egyptiae litterae*" [sacred Egyptian letters] depicting a large blossoming oak tree the trunk of which was designed to represent the form of a scepter and with two eyes which be seen in the tangle of overhanging branches. To the left and right of the crown of the tree, there were two heads exchanging glances; one was male with hair and a partial beard and the other female. At the base of the tree could be seen an alligator or a dragon, while the branches supporting two basket-shaped nests contained chicks with their beaks wide open towards which from the right and left two hawks flew in. There were also two other birds of the same species in a resting position. The remaining space was filled with clusters of mature vines that sprang from a plant enveloping the oak.

All these symbols mean then, "Sum Osiris rex Iuppiter justus, qui universo imperavi orbi et profectus cum musis praecipue Sais Xantho prope Italiam – scilicet ad fontes Danubii; sum

³² See Anniius, fol. XXVI^r *Sexta Osiriana Aegyptia tabula*: "Majores nostri in templo olim Herculis, nunc divi Laurentii, ut semper ante oculos nostros aeterna vetustatis hujus urbis memoria teneretur, pro rostris posuit (probably meaning posuerunt) columnulam, id est tabulam alabastrinam". By alabaster he meant a kind of fine-grained marble, in the same way that Dürer wrote about Michelangelo's marble statue of Bruges, "das Alabaster Marienbild". Valeriano cit. mentions this column in Viterbo several times: on p. 155, in a treatise dedicated to Sadoletto "in antiqua columna Viterbii spectatur" - and since Sadoletto received the text in the mid-twenties, then the column must have still been in place; also on p. 376 in the comments on Hieronymus Roboreus "in columna quadam ex alabastrite Viterbii spectare licet". And in the dedication to Henry II of France, the location of the column seems to have been unchanged in 1547; in the treatise dedicated to Joannes Jacob Fugger shortly before the edition of 1556, it is stated on page 230: "superioribus annis facies hujusmodi . . . Viterbii antiquo lapide visebatur"; see below for the comments on the *Hieroglyphica* of Valeriano.

Osiris rex, qui vocatus ab Italis contra oppressores Italici imperii festinus occurri oppressoresque a duabus partibus Italiae aggressus devici deque illis triumphavi; sum Osiris qui docui Italos arare, serere, putare, vinitare, vinum conficere et eis duos reliqui custodes imperii mari et terra nepotes meos". [I am Osiris, Jupiter the just king, who has ruled the sphere of the universe and set out with the Muses, especially Sais Xantho to Italy – towards the sources of the Danube; I am the king Osiris, who was summoned by the Italians against the oppressors of the Italian empire and quickly met the invaders in two regions of Italy, overcame them and triumphed over them; I am Osiris, who taught the Italians to plow, sow, prune, plant vines and make wine, and left my two grandchildren as guardians of the sea and the land of the kingdom].

At first glance you do not have the impression of being in front of a forgery. It is very likely that in the church there was an ancient sculpture, perhaps of the late Roman era, such as a circular altar or a marble fountain. In fact, it is very difficult to understand how Annius could have invented the presence of this without arousing the suspicion of antiquarians. Given the prevailing lack of critical sense which we have already referred to, it is not surprising that even Annius would have judged this carving a real hieroglyph and believed that he could read it. But what is really suspicious, given his penchant for fakes, is the final note stating that there is no certainty that this column really was, as he assumed, original.³³ However, since, according to a credible source, he had actually had concealed in one of the vines inscriptions which he himself had created, ensuring that they would be found and then taken to the authorities as proof of the very early founding of Viterbo, the suspicion arises that in this case the column in the church had been replaced by a forgery. This hypothesis is further strengthened by the strangely precise correspondence between the decoration and the phrases describing it, a correspondence that could only have occurred if the sculpture had been made in the desired sense from a copy. These elements therefore appear to confirm that the inscription was an illustrative example of how human-

³³ See Annius cit., fol. XXVIII" "Quo tempore haec tabella fuerit excise patet quam primum sub Osiride. An vero haec ilia sit, an ei vetustate labenti ad ejus exemplar suffecta, nondum compertum habemus. Existimamus tamen eandem permanere". For the forgery of statues see Augustinus cit., p. 177. The guarantor of Annius was Latinus Latinus Viterbiensis, "vir doctus bonaeque fidei".

ists were not content merely wanting to read the hieroglyphs but also claimed to be able to write them.

For the origin of the story of the antiquities of Annius, the utmost importance can be attributed to the fact that one of the columns which Osiris had erected in various places during his successful military campaign across the world, was, according to Diodorus, still in Viterbo.^{xxxvi} For this reason, the interpretation of the Egyptian characters follows exactly what Diodorus had reported about the column of Osiris located in Arabia. Annius attempted to include in his interpretation every element that contributed to prove his thesis: the presence of Osiris in Viterbo accompanied by one of the Muses and by Hercules, and the lessons that they and the commanders left in place gave to the inhabitants of Etruria.

As explained in detail by Annius, the descriptions that allude to this are taken literally from the images referred to above. To achieve this he employed not only the objects depicted but even their forms in isolation or in context. Thus according to Macrobius, the tree like a scepter endowed with eyes would indicate Osiris, the eye, according to Diodorus, the *justitiae servator*, the multiplicity of its trunks is the symbol of the extension of an successful military campaign, the oak alludes to the original food of humanity, while the tops of the branches recall the art of pruning trees. The nests with young birds above all would signify Italy in search of aid, while as baskets^{xxxvii} they would represent Osiris, the teacher of agriculture. The hawks in flight represent, according to Diodorus, the speed of the assistance of Osiris and of his son Hercules Aegyptius, while the figures that are seated, represent the power of his nephews Lestrigone and Phorcus. Only the crocodile would have a single meaning and hints at the plight of the giants mentioned by Diodorus. The same is true of the vine, the other civilizing elements introduced by Osiris, and the two heads, of which the female would indicate an Egyptian muse and the male, Osiris himself during his military campaign. According to Annius, Osiris had vowed not to cut his hair until this campaign had ended.³⁴

Despite the fact that the author attained here the peak of naïve ingenuity, it seems a very strange coincidence that this ancient sculpture which incorporates all these important hieroglyphs and the commentary of Annius, which seeks to document these meanings, was mainly based on Diodorus and

^{xxxvi} That is, according to Annius.

^{xxxvii} Giehlow uses the Greek word *kalathi* meaning baskets. This may have derived from his reading of Valeriano fol. 408 on liberality which refers to the “calathos” and to the “modius”, a measure or small vessel of grain often depicted in classical times as being worn on the head of Serapis (a Hellenistic successor of Osiris) thus symbolizing regeneration. For bibliographic references to Serapis see Curran, 2007, p. 296 nt. 35.

³⁴ See on this Valeriano cit., p. 376.

Macrobius. Anniius must surely therefore have replaced the old stone with a new column and maybe one day it will be possible to find the former and see whether there are traces of an ancient model. Nevertheless, with this, Anniius provided a description and authentic interpretation which was particularly important for the study of hieroglyphs in the Renaissance since he legitimized a freer method that was based not solely on the principle that every element of a hieroglyph should be used to define a single word.

It seems that our author had completed his forgeries of ancient texts contained in his *Commentaria de Antiquitatibus* before Alexander VI was elected pope. And this is evidenced from his remark³⁵ that he had retrieved them from oblivion during the reconquest of Granada, that is, before 1492. The passage on the ancient history of Spain, a mixed³⁶ work, was based on the forgeries already described and although supposedly used by students from the Iberian peninsular, it must have been edited later, after Ferdinand of Aragon and Elizabeth of Castile granted Anniius patronage for the publication of his work, since up to 17th September 1721 the Academy of Lisbon warned against its use for historical purposes. In this treatise, as in *de Institutiones de aequivocis*, in the passage where there is a description of the column of Osiris there are allusions to Alexander VI so that it cannot be prior to 1492. Moreover, just as the birthplace of the Pope, that is Valencia, is related etymologically to Rome,^{xxxviii} Anniius seems to have wanted to rely on the usual humanistic vanity of the Pope, who would have certainly wished to boast of his Roman origins.³⁷ The fact that thanks to such flattery Anniius had indeed been able to gain the favor of the Pope is demonstrated by the visit of Alexander VI to Viterbo, where Anniius directed the recov-

xxxviii Tesauro (p.298) points out that the connection between the two names lies in valens meaning powerful in Latin and βῶμη meaning strength in Greek.

³⁵ His words in the dedication to the king and queen of Spain are as follows: "... quae e sepulcris et infernis fucinis absconsa et primum e latebris educta et in lucem prodita eo tempore, quo Beticae regno potiti estis, jure Beticis victoribus regibus primum dicata sunt ..."

³⁶ In the *editio princeps*, the treatises of the *Institutiones de aequivocis* and the *Quaestiones Anniae* were then attached to the *Commentaria de Antiquitatibus* published on July 10, 1498, while they were added by Eucharius Silber in Rome on 3rd August 1498, after Anniius obtained the 'privilege' on July 23 of that year. The Paris edition of 1515 does not respect the original order of the treatises.

³⁷ See Anniius cit., fol. CX: "Est enim idem dictum Aramee atque graece Roma, quod Latine Valencia sicut et Romus valens"; then: "Valencia inclyta ... Borgiana domo, quae maxime enituit summis pontificibus Callisto III. . . nunc sanctissimo pontifice maximo Alexandro VI".

ery of four statues in the presence of the whole Curia. He says that the existence of these works had been revealed by a hare but in reality, the incorrigible forger had had them specially transported there as is demonstrated beyond any doubt by the existence of verses, composed in a language claimed to be Etruscan and which Anniius himself must have translated, honoring the alleged presence of Isis in Viterbo.³⁸

So Anniius continued to work on his main project until its publication in July of 1498. Since the work would soon attract amazing success, especially abroad, despite individual criticism, the author had to pay bitterly for the arrogance that he had shown during his lifetime when he had always openly expressed his opinions. He ended up by attracting the malevolence of Cesare Borgia^{xxxix} to whom he fell victim on 13th November 1502.

Like the many tragedies and crimes of the Renaissance the horror of which was massaged by art even the intellectual ravages of Anniius had their painterly dignity. His close relations with the Borgias, just mentioned, can be deduced from the fact that he was one of that group of humanists at the court of Alexander VI who had provided Pinturicchio with the allegorical/symbolic themes for the decoration of the Borgia apartments. In May of 1492 Anniius was still in Viterbo, where on the eighth of that month he dedicated to Barotius, bishop of Padua, a treatise on taxes. He moved to Rome from Viterbo either just before or immediately after the election of Pope Rodrigo Borgia in August of 1492 if only to make contacts with a view to the publication of his work. In December of that year Pinturicchio with his assistants began to fresco the Borgia Apartment, a task that would continue until the end of 1495.

The close link between the paintings in the vault of the Borgia apartments^{xl} and the genealogical studies of Anniius – at least in the case of the magnificent salon, the Hall of Prints or of the Saints (according to the most recent denomination) – shows to what an extent the learned expert in the study of antiquity had been asked to provide a historical justification for the iconographical program. Schmarsow has already identified the family history of the Borgias, shown by the bull that is depicted in the frescoes, in the images of the two vaults and in the area that separates them where there are represented indi-

xxxix The infamous Cesare Borgia was the illegitimate son of Alexander VI and brother of Lucrezia Borgia.

xl For bibliographic references to the Borgia Apartments, see Curran, 2007, cit., p. 325 nts. 2 and 3.

³⁸ See *ibid.* fol. XVI, XV and the final words of fol. CLXXI: “ubi tunc eorum (Jasii et Cybelis) sacrae statuae de more ad memoriam suffossae, nuper astante sanctissimo pontifice maximo Alexandro VI, cum tota curia inventae indicio leporis effossae sint et iterate in Veizum palatium translatae ad memoriam”.

vidual episodes of the activities of Osiris and Isis, indicating in that animal the point of departure for the glorification of the origins of the pontiff. This theme was not further developed however, so with Schmarsow we continue to wonder at the arbitrariness of the choice of episodes from Egyptian myth, and to be surprised at the mix of pagan images and of legendary biblical stories, having to be content with extracting from this odd mixture some vague allusion to the Borgia family, some sophisticated reference, some secret which must have been known to guide the humanists of the court of Alexander VI.^{39,xli} The *Commentaria* of Annius provides a solution.

The representations of Osiris on one of the vaults tell in fact of his exploits before the military campaigns, while others represent his death from Typhon and his subsequent veneration as Apis. Annius does not refer to the figure of Osiris of Egyptian-Greek mythology but basically to what he believed he had discovered in the text of Berossus, namely the historical figure of the Pharaoh Osiris, the son of Saturn Camesis, husband of Io/Isis, brother of the Nile Ocean, father of the Egyptian Hercules and therefore, as indicated in their arms, the remote ancestor of the Borgias.⁴⁰ In this cycle it seems that much of paganism could be traced back to the time of the birth of Christ and consequently even the series of pictures of Io, which appear on the fascia of the vault do not aim to glorify the beloved of Zeus, so much as the ancestor of the Borgias. Sometimes Annius even appears to argue against the identification of Io, the daughter of Inachus, with the other Io mentioned above worshipped by the Egyptians with the name of Isis, sister and wife of Osiris.⁴¹ The depiction of Isis in the role of legislator

^{xli} Pinturicchio is the subject of one of Vasari's Lives and Arnold Goffin's *Pinturicchio biographie critique* Laurens, 1908 is also still relevant.

³⁹ A. Schmarsow, *Pinturicchio in Rom*, Stuttgart 1882, pp. 34 ff. See also: *Gli affreschi del Pinturicchio nell' Appartamento Borgia del Palazzo Apostolico Vaticana* reproduced and accompanied by a commentary by F. Ehrle and E. Stevenson, Rome 1897, p. 68; and E. Steinmann, *Pinturicchio*, in H. Knackfuss, *Künstler-Monographien*, vol. XXXVII (1895), p. 57. On p. 41 there is reproduced a part of the frescoes of the Sala dei Santi.

⁴⁰ See Annius cit., fol. XXVI: "Osiris . . . docens . . . tauros domesticare ad aratrum, unde Apis unum ex cognominibus habuit"; in fol. CXII^{r/v} can be found the family tree; in fol. CXXXIII, are the observations about the presence of Osiris in Italy; in fol. CXXXVII those with respect to Egyptian Hercules; in fol. XXVII those relating to Ocean. Annius always provides the date and year of the reign of the successors of Osiris.

⁴¹ Regarding the claim of Io-Isis in Annius, see *ibid.*, fol. CXXV in fol. XXV, one reads: "Primo quaeritur, quae fuerit Isis sive Ceres frugifera; respondet Diodorus Siculus in primo libro, quod Io soror et coniunx Osiridis dicta est Isis, id est Ceres frugifera et legifera, quia prima leges dedit et fruges invenit. . ."; see fol. CLXXI, which tells of the "Argeus campus" and in several other passages, though not without internal contradictions.

and judge in Egypt during the campaign of her husband, a fact which did not ring true to Schmarsow, confirms, if traced to the myth of Io, that we find ourselves in the presence of an Io-Isis in the sense desired by Annius. Some confusion certainly should have arisen as a result of the representation of Argus and of Mercury, who have a role only in the Greek legend of Io. Of course, the boundless imagination that Annius demonstrated in building his family history leads us to suppose that these two figures were included in some episode of the Egyptian Io-Isis. In the commentary on his work he alludes to a passage from Festus according to whom Isis (as Ceres) had appeared in a pasture of cattle, the Campus Argaeus. So we must assume that even the figures in the shelters described by Schmarsow, that is Judith, David and Goliath, Neptune and



Fig. 14 Pinturicchio's *Myth of Osiris* North Vault of the Sala de Santi, Borgia Apartments; detail

Hercules, are related to Osiris: Hercules would then be his son, his brother Neptune, Typhon would represent Goliath, and Judith would be the wife of Osiris who avenged her spouse.

A part of the decoration of the vault is explained by accompanying verses. Next to the scene in which Osiris taught the use of the plow reads: "suscepto regno docuit egiptiacos arare et pro deo habitus" [having assumed the kingdom, he taught

the Egyptians to plough and respect God], while in the image of the fruit harvest is written: “legere poma ab arboribus docuit” [He taught them to pick apples from trees]. This corresponds almost literally to the verses of Tibullus cited by Annianus in the *Commentaria* from the fifth book of Berosus:

Primus aratra manu sollerti fecit Osiris
et tenerum ferro sollicitavit humum,
primus inexpertae commisit semina terrae,
pomaque non notis legit ab arboribus;⁴²
hic docuit primus palis adjungere vitem
et teneram dura caedere falce comam.

[Osiris made the first plow with skilful hand
and turned the soft earth with an iron blade,
He first sowed seeds in the fallow earth,
and gathered apples from the empty trees;
He first taught how to add the vine to stakes
and cut the green foliage with his hard scythe.]

Assuming, then, that Annianus of Viterbo should be considered the likely designer of the decoration of the ceiling in the Hall of the Saints, it is clear that there is in the fresco no reference to the expedition of Osiris. In fact it would be difficult for Annianus to depict any element worthy of being represented without mentioning the arrival in Italy of the hero of the House of Borgia. It would have been necessary to falsify first the relief on the column of Osiris, which is described successively only in the parts of the *Commentarii* written after the election of Alexander VI. Perhaps at that time the sculpture had not yet been completed, so Annianus did not take the opportunity to choose as a theme the representation of a historical hypothesis that had not been proven. In addition by that time the man who later became his bitter opponent, that is Raphael Maffei of Volterra, was working on his *Commentaria urbana*.⁴³ It is likely that Annianus' proposal was not received

⁴² The author illustrates the same verses of the hieroglyphs from the column of Osiris, see fol. XXVIII^r.

⁴³ For the opinion of Volterra on Annianus, see *Commentariorum urbanorum XXXVIII libri*, Basileae 1530, fol. 451: “caeterum seculo non parcam, cum libelli quidam infaceti nuper falsis editi titulis lectitentur, ut ex filo et multis pugnantis deprehenditur”; fol. 52: “apud Viterbium Vetulonium etiam fuisse quidam nuper scriptor tradidit, quod sane ex Ptolemaeo, ut alibi dixi, esse non potest”; fol. 159: “ejus [Berosus] nunc fertur libellus nescio quis, cui

during the course of the conference in the presence of the pope and that he, in the absence of evidence, had shelved his plan and as a consequence had begun the implementation of the column decorations.

The participation of this particular hieroglyphic expert from the humanist era in the pictorial decoration of the Borgia apartments explains in a rather precise way the limits to which the humanists could go in their tendency to see hieroglyphs everywhere. On the other hand, Pinturicchio was an artist on whom the decoration of the recently discovered ruins of the imperial Roman palace and baths, had exerted a very great influence. Using his artistic invention, he was the first to employ “grotesques” to a large extent.^{xlii}

xlii See C. Cieri-Via “Caracteres et figures in opera magico”. Pinturicchio et la décoration de la “camera segreta” de l'appartement Borgia, *Revue de l'art*. (1991) 94, pp. 11-26. For more on grotesques see Philippe Morel *Les Grotesques* Paris: Flammarion 1997, F. K. Barasch *The Grotesque. A Study in Meanings*. La Haye-Paris, 1971 and M. Camille *Image on the Edge. The Margins of Medieval Art*. London: 1992. Giehlow refers here to the discovery of the Domus Aurea, a vast palace, perhaps a kilometer square built by Nero that, he said, finally allowed him to live like a human being. The palace was such an embarrassment to his successors that it was immediately covered over and built upon. It was only rediscovered by chance at the end of the 15th century. Raphael's decoration of the Vatican Loggia was also based on grotesques from the Domus Aurea. For further bibliographic references to the Domus Aurea, see Curran, 2007, p. 309 nt. 16.

This graceful Roman decoration comprising animals, birds and insects in a wide variety of shapes partly natural, partly fantastic, surrounded by the most diverse objects such as masks, containers, veils and the like, would not have been possible unless they reflected a hieroglyphic sense in a humanist who was always looking for interpretative opportunities. Especially since in the typical depictions of Egyptian art, such as sphinxes, the grotesques had a leading role. Nonetheless, the artistic sensibility of the age was not yet so rigid that it could not leave room for such inspiration. The free and playful way in which the artists of antiquity mixed objects of such a heterogeneous nature in a purely decorative manner with so obvious a free creative force that it obviates the possibility at least in these cases of detecting hidden wisdom or historical revelations. The grotesques became therefore, in some sense, a kind of antidote to the cultural movement linked to the hieroglyphs, thus retaining the freedom of the artist to compose purely decorative schemes.

As can be seen from his definition of the hieroglyphs, those found by Annii bordered on the grotesque: “sacrae enim hae effigies sunt, quae mox cernentem cogunt petere, quid haec significant; sacrae enim literae dicuntur, quae magis ad secretum aliquid significandum quam ornatum apparent cuilibet aspicienti institutae” [for these images are sacred which should signify something secret rather than just decorative as might ap-

non satis crediderim”. Volterano refers on fol. 187^v to the legend of Io according to Ovid and tells how she came to Egypt was transformed into a cow, and then into human form and having taught agriculture received divine honors. Volterra lived from 1451 to 1522 and dedicated his commentaries, a sort of encyclopedia of knowledge, to Julius II.

pear to anyone looking at their disposition].⁴⁴ In this way, they were distinct entities that transmitted to the observer images that gave the impression of being used as a secret writing, but were only used for decorative purposes. And amongst these are the ones so copiously used by Pinturicchio to decorate the Borgia Apartment, since they reflect a feeling of sheer decorative joy and a formal pleasure in the antique.

⁴⁴ See Anniius cit., fol. XXVI^r; here he follows Pliny cit., bk. XXXVI, 8, 'hoc ipsum inscriptum est in eo (obelisco) etenim sculpturae illae effigiesque, quas videmus, Aegyptae sunt litterae'.

ⁱ The twentieth century literature on the *Hypnerotomachia* is very extensive in its discussion of the book's contents, authorship and place in the history of the printed book. Mario Praz, the author of the classic bibliography *Studies in 17th Century Imagery*, Rome: Edizione de Storia e Letteratura, 1964 calls it "doubtless, the most extraordinary book of the Renaissance". See 'Some Foreign Imitators of the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*', *Italica*, XXIV, March, No. 1, 1947, pp. 20 – 25 and Carl Jung in his introduction to Linda Fierz-David, *The Dream of Poliphilo*, Dallas: Spring Publications, 1987 goes further and calls it "a work that may well claim to be among the most beautiful printed books of all time". A bibliography is given on line at <http://knops.home.xs4all.nl/hypoi.html> which is derived principally from Pozzi and Ciapponi's edition of the *Hypnerotomachia*, Padua: Antenori, 1964. This contains the full text and a critical edition of the Poliphilean language and sources. References to this edition are given in the notes to the present text. Another bibliography is given in Liane Lefavre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997. The first full English translation is that of Jocelyn Godwin published in 1999 by Thames and Hudson. All translations into English from the *Hypnerotomachia* in the present text are taken from Godwin. In spite of the internal evidence of Colonna's authorship, a debate continues as to other possible authors. Lefavre cit. champions L. B. Alberti as does Emanuela Kretzeslesco-Quaranta, *Les jardins du songe: "Poliphile" et la mystique de la Renaissance*, Rome, Editrice Magma, 1976; it is attributed to Felice Feliciano by A. Khomentovskaia in 'Felice Feliciano da Verona', *Bibliofilia*, 37 (1935), pp. 154-73, 200-211 and 38 (1936), pp. 20-47 and 92-101 and by L. Donati, 'Diciamo qualche cosa del Polifillo', *Maso*

CHAPTER 4

◼ FRA FRANCESCO COLONNA AND HIS HIEROGLYPHS

The playful character of the artistic imagination does not always appear nor is it revealed in such a purely decorative manner and this is particularly true when the artist is known to be prone to speculation and open to the influence of scholars. Thus the limits imposed on Annius are extremely uncertain because they rely on subjective criteria in judging whether a picture is more or less a hieroglyph. That in the same period as Annius another cultured and sensitive humanist had produced an exemplary collection of hieroglyphic inscriptions, is a fortunate coincidence that allows us to gain an overview of hieroglyphic studies of the time, and provides further evidence of the context in which in the early Renaissance it was believed that a certain wisdom could be achieved through hieroglyphs and therefore an attempt should be made to imitate them. The author of this collection was the famous Dominican Francesco Colonna, born in Venice in 1433, and the monumental work containing this collection is the famous *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, *ubi humana omnia non nisi somnium esse docet*, [*Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, in which it is shown that all human things are but a dream] printed by Aldus in December of 1499.ⁱ

As with Annius it was not enough that there existed already literary and artistic monuments of antiquity from which an image of the past that he cherished could be constructed, for in the same way Colonna with his enthusiasm for the beauty of the ancient world, felt that what had been handed down by tradition was insufficient. His imagination could see the splendor of antiquity in an even more dazzling manner, even more grandiose its construction, more luxurious the life that was lived, more enchanting its cults, its wisdom more rich in secrets. For Colonna's literary reputation the fact of his being a poet was a stroke of fortune. He transposed his picture of antiquity into a dream creation under the name of Poliphilo, dedicated to Polia queen of his heart who embodied his beloved antiquity. In this way, contrary to what occurred to his fellow Dominican Annius, he avoided being branded as a forger. He succeeded, however, in following his secret wish, to stand out as a person who was familiar with both unknown authors and architectural images. In fact,

linking known to fictional elements, adding abundant citations to his fantastic imagination and using his great archaeological knowledge to describe non-existent works of art, he gave his contemporaries the impression that even the most daring creations of his imagination were based on things actually seen or read. No less a mind than that of Erasmus was deceived into assuming, based on the description of the hieroglyphs made by Colonna, that they derived from the lost works of Chaeremon. No wonder then that this collection of inscriptions was considered authentic and frequently reprinted, or that the forger Boissard himself was misled by it, and cited as an ancient work existing in Rome, the sacrifice of Priapus, described by Poliphilo, which actually refers to a simple Priapic relief.¹ This happened without the direct intervention of the author and the term itself *Hypnerotomachia* clearly alludes to the dreamlike nature of this poetry. A century later the severe archbishop of Tarragona, Antonio Agostino, in an attempt to eliminate the false opinion which he believed was widespread, while justly defining the work of Colonna as a joke, mistakenly assumed that the author was Annius of Viterbo.² Today, there is a renaissance of studies in the field. Those of the calibre of Ilg have given the *Hypnerotomachia*, the woodcuts of which had already established it as a splendid work of art, a primary role amongst the sources of the period.^{3,ii}

¹ J. Boissardus, *I Pars Romanae Urbis Topographiae et Antiquitatum Francofurti 1597*, fol. K refers to “ejus ergo Priapi effigiem Romae positam nos in apposito schemate exhibemus”. The engraving cited is nothing but a free copy of the woodcut of the *Hypnerotomachia*, whose ancient models corresponded to the findings probably represented by the reliefs of Boissard *VI Pars I sive III Tomus Inscriptionum et Monumentarum, quae Romae in saxis et marmoribus visuntur*, Francofurti 1598, pl. 36: herm of Priapus, surrounded by donkey heads, sacrificial knives, fruit baskets, etc.; pl. 73: herm of Priapus, along with two women and scythes.

² Augustinus cit., p. 179: “O male collocatas horas in his ineptiis describendis”. Even Winckelmann cit., p. 262, seems to have thought in a very different manner, when he said about the complex allegories of Francesco Colonna: “I leave aside dreams of this kind”. Lessing takes up in his *Analects* the remark that Cardanos would use the *Hypnerotomachia* to fall asleep, see J. Schuck, *Aldus Manutius*, Berlin 1862. It is a different opinion that Mirabeau expressed in an article in *Le conservateur* (1756-1761) where we read: “Au milieu de cette ridicule bigarrure un conte agréable à lire”, see J. W. Appell, *The dream of Poliphilus*: 1893 where the collection of woodcuts is reproduced by photolithography.

³ A. Ilg, *Ueber den Werth der kunsthistorischen ‘Hypnerotomachia Poliphili’*, Vienna 1872, p. 33. More broadly see C. Popelin, *Le songe de Poliphile ou Hypnérotomachie de Frère Francesco Colonna*, Paris: 1883. In this French translation the woodcuts of the French edition of 1546 are added on a smaller scale. Popelin’s essay stands out for its extensive references to the literary sources of Colonna. Unfortunately there is lacking a similar analysis on the

Finiguerra, 3 (1938), p. 70-96; another Francesco Colonna, a Roman aristocrat, is suggested by Maurizio Calvesi, *Il sogno di Poliphilo*, Rome: Officina Edizioni, 1980; for Aldus himself, in Leonard Schmeiser, *Das Werk des Druckers. Untersuchungen zum Buch Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, Roesner, 2003 and Pico Della Mirandola by Giovanni Pietschman and Gianna Pinotti in an article at <http://xoomer.alice.it/gpasett/pico.htm>.

ii Albert Ilg (1847-1896) was an Austrian art historian. His article has been digitized and can be found at https://play.google.com/store/books/details/Albert_Ilg_Ueber_Den_Kunsthistorischen_Werth_Der_H?id=1DoCAAAAQAAJ. One of his principal conclusions, not now generally accepted, was that there were at least two separate artists for the anonymous illustrations of the Poliphili.

The lack of attention that until now has been devoted to the ancient Egyptian influence on the Renaissance explains why the extensive studies of Colonna on the subject have been neglected. The value given to them by his contemporaries can also be seen from the summaries that introduced the various editions of the work in prose and verse, in Latin and the vernacular. Here, for example, is an anonymous elegy for the reader:

Vetusta
 Plurima Niliacis disce referta notis.
 Hic sunt pyramides, thermae, ingentesque colossi.
 Ac obeliscorum forma vetusta patet.
 [The many ancient things expressed in Nilotic signs.
 Here are pyramids, baths and vast colossi,
 And the ancient form of obelisks appears.]

The description in the vernacular puts strong emphasis on the various “pyramids, obelisks, great ruined buildings,” “a tiled peristyle, where in the Middle Ages the Trinity was expressed in hieroglyph figures, that is sacred Egyptian sculptures” while in “terza rima” there can be read:

le molte note cum le lore misure
 Servate appresso el Nilo dagli Egypti
 Le pyramide antiche sculpture
 Cum gli obelischi in cima aquelle riti.
 [Observe the many notes with their measurements
 Concerning the Egyptian Nile,
 The pyramids, antique tombs,
 Together with obelisks erected upon them.ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱⁱ Both these extracts come from dedicatory poems in the introduction to the *Hypnerotomachia*.

This is only an approximation. In fact, no fewer than three obelisks are described in full in the *Hypnerotomachia* with their hieroglyphics, as well as another construction defined in one place as an obelisk, in another as a funeral pyre. There are also other hieroglyphic inscriptions, citations on obelisks from particular passages in Diodorus, Pliny, and Theophrastus, and to enrich the descriptions, the author even uses details on Egyptian provided by Strabo, Herodotus and Diodorus. In particular the mystery rites of worship and sacrifice which Polia and Poliphilo assist in are modeled on the Egyptian ceremonies of Apuleius. When the author wanted to add something especially grandiose, supernatural or mystical, he used

archeology, and only on such a basis, could the origin of the text and images be reconstructed more securely. With regard to such matters I am grateful for the help of Professors Bormann and von Schneider of Vienna.

information about Egypt taken from the ancient authors which he carefully collated for this purpose.

Colonna is of course more a poet than a scholar and since he is especially seeking to put his knowledge of hieroglyphs in a good light, his imagination has plenty of scope when it comes to using them and making whole sentences of them but, as has happened, it is wrong to see the book only as a creation of his imagination^{4,iv} Those expressions, which are in essence a cryptic script and not merely the arbitrary inventions of the author, are in fact the consequence of the enigmatic hieroglyphs handed down by antiquity to the Renaissance. Colonna knew Amianus, Diodorus and Macrobius too well, and was too tied to the scientific movement of his time not to develop and use for his own purpose this new branch of study.

All of this clashes with what was believed up until now, since the origin of every hieroglyph created by Colonna is a passage from the classics or was based on an authentic or at least a supposedly authentic Egyptian sculpture. Only in cases where there is no such reference can it be assumed to have been a result of Colonna's imagination. To analyze the hieroglyphs of Poliphilo for his sources of inspiration you cannot help but review the various stages of drafting the work and link it with the life of the author. Although often this task has to be based only on conjecture, given the fragmentary nature of the available information, it is nevertheless essential to obtain an overview of the knowledge that the Renaissance possessed of hieroglyphics.

Colonna was 66 years old when Leonardo Crasso of Verona^v "artium ac juri pontificii consultus" [Counsellor in Arts and Pontifical Law], decided to have the *Hypnerotomachia* printed at his own expense in the workshop of Aldus and dedicated it to Guidobaldo, Duke of Montefeltro. The author had already lost hope of seeing his one life's work hitherto published as you can see from the verses in praise of Crasso, composed by Giambattista Scitha of Feltre.⁵

⁴ See Ilg cit., p. 79: "The author borrows the term hieroglyphic from the Greek description of Egyptian monuments, while the substance is exclusively the result of his imagination, for he certainly did not know the essence of hieroglyphics". Popelin cit., p. XLI: "les (hieroglyphes) sont tout simplement et ingénieuses inventions de Colonna, se rapprochent bien plus des rebus de Picardie, que nous donne le seigneur des Accords que de l'écriture hiératique des prêtres de Memphis". Appell cit. p. 5: "monuments bearing enigmatic devices (erroneously described as hieroglyphs)".

⁵ In respect of Crasso and Scitha see Popelin cit., p. CXC and further on what is said about Colonna's knowledge of hieroglyphics and the Italian humanists of the early sixteenth century.

^{iv} See ch. 3 nt. xii above for the Rebus de Picardie referred to in nt. 4.

^v Crasso was a lawyer from Verona, a Papal Protonotary, captain of the citadel of Verona and Superintendent of Fortifications at Padua. His brother worked for Guidobaldo of Montefeltro, the dedicatee of the *Hypnerotomachia*. See Lefaiivre cit., p. 93.

Nam cum conditus (liber) in situ jaceret,
Lethen jam metuens sibi propinquam.

[For while it lay from its creation
Fearing the approach of oblivion.]

The manuscript, after it was initially completed, had long been half-forgotten, and after many years extensive changes had been made. In the dedication to Polia, Poliphilo expressly says, “I commit this gift to your wise and intelligent judgment, abandoning the original style and having translated it into the present one at your behest”. The passage refers to the alleged translation of the text in this strange macaronic language that is defined in the dedication to Crasso as “res una in eo miranda” [one thing that is remarkable about it] described as “quod cum nostrati lingua loquatur, non minus opus sit graeca et romana quam tusca et vernacula” [that although it speaks our tongue, in order to understand it one needs Latin and Greek no less than Tuscan and the vernacular]. This is a unique language that aims to make pleasant reading for both scholars and for non-scholars, so that – as Crasso confirmed – “nisi qui doctissimus in doctrinae suae sacrarium penetrare non posset, qui vero non doctus accederet, non disperaret tamen” [only he who is the most learned will be able to penetrate the inner sanctum of his teaching; yet he who approaches it with less learning should not despair]. Here one can at least pursue the question whether the first draft was in Latin or the vernacular, although we know that the work was developed in two distinct phases.

The first version seems to have been finalized on the Kalends of May 1467, a date indicated by Poliphilo himself. Since the entire work would be treated as a dream, even this date was originally thought to be fictitious. This is incorrect. Since Colonna allowed the work to be published anonymously, hiding

⁶ The initials of the individual chapters form the following sentence: “Poliam frater Franciscus Colonna permavit”. Ilg added the M in the dedication to this series of letters but did not explain why. It seems that it must have been written at a later date. The mystery of the name was soon revealed: Apostolo Zeno found in a volume of the *Hypnerotomachia*, under the date MDXII, XX Junii MDXXI a note, which stated that “Columna, dum amore ardentissimo eiusdam Hippolitae teneretur, mutato nomine Poliam eam autumat” (see Popelin cit., p. LXXXIX). Today it is generally thought that Polia was a fiction like Dante’s Beatrice and Petrarch’s Laura, although the oldest authors claimed that she was a real person: Temanza, *Vite de’ piu celebri architetti e scultori veneziani*, Venice 1778, and Federici, *Memorie Trevigiane*, Venice 1803. This last corrects the daring hypothesis of

his name in the initials of its individual chapters,^{6,vi} and thus concealing his scientific studies in a poem and presenting it as an allegory for his passion for the beauty of antiquity, while he maintained a basis for some real elements that have to be deciphered. The final date of the composition is thus unknown,^{vii} although the date above must certainly contain some element of truth as an indication of the end of the preliminary work for the *Hypnerotomachia*.

This hypothesis fits in well with the biographical information on Francesco Colonna. He appeared for the first time in a

Temanza as a result of archival research conducted in Treviso. In addition, he published a manuscript kept in the Archive of San. Niccolò and edited by Dr. Niccolò Mauro, a scholar of the sixteenth century, which contains a genealogy of Treviso, a genealogy which also includes that of the family of Lelia Trevigiani (p. 113, in respect of Mauro see p. 153). The family originated from Terni (Teramum), and its founder, Simeone, born in Venice, had been a lawyer in Treviso and then moved to Rome as a papal lawyer. From his marriage with a certain Marchesina of Treviso, daughter of Titus Butanichius, there were born four children, as is shown by Federici in the family tree. One of them, Franciscus, a judge in his hometown, in 1454 had a daughter named Hypolita. His eldest son had a more important career given that he was a lawyer with the consistory in Rome, then became bishop of Feltre, then of Treviso and finally died a cardinal in 1466. Within the same letters containing the family tree there is added the remark, due to Federici, that Franciscus and Teodoro were born in Treviso. This statement contrasts with others relating to Theodorus Laelius or Teodoro de Lelli (see J. B. Sägmüller, *Zur Geschichte des Kardinalates, Tractat des Bischofs von Feltre und Treviso, Theodore de' Lelli*, Roma 1893 Supplement zur Röm. Quartalschrift für christl. Alterthum, 1893), according to which Teodoro was born in Terni; see Ughello *Italia sacra* Venice 1720, p. 376: "Interamnae Aprutinae natus", p. 563: "Interamnensis civis". Ughello, however, is imprecise concerning the death of Teodoro, seeing that in one place he says 1465 and in another 1464. In favor of Lelli's birth in Terni, Biondo quotes a passage in his *Italia illustrata* Basileae 1559, p. 395. It is worth reproducing here as a guide to the Roman family (according to Voigt, Biondo finished his work between 1450 and 1453), "Genuit is locus (Teramum) magnum regioni ornamentum Simeonem patrem et Theodorum illum jureconsultissimos gente progenitos Laelia, quorum ille in Pisana, Constantiensi et Basiliensi synodis pontificumque Romanorum curia causas egregie peroravit, hic sacri palatii auditor est, genitorque Venetiis natus Romam nunc incolunt". Since then Mauro's information about Teodoro has been confirmed – in respect of the life of Teodoro see also L. von Pastor, *Geschichte der Papst im Zeitalter der Renaissance*, vol. II, Freiburg 1894, p. 366 – as have his remarks that link Lelli with Treviso, assuming that Federici has not interpolated them; this deserves greater attention than has hitherto been given. The assumption of Federici that Polia is a transformation of the name Hypolite is therefore not impossible. The transposition of a real person into an idealized setting reflects the mentality of Colonna well so that even his identification with an eternally young antiquity could be explained in this way. It is possible that a renewed search in the archives of Treviso could result in a definitive clarification of this. For more on this subject see below pp. 111 ff.

vi Such a conceit was not unknown amongst Medieval and Renaissance authors. There was the acrostic in the Sibylline Oracles, on the name of Jesus, the acrostic poems of the Latin author Commodian, the figure poems in acrostic form by Venantius Fortunatus from the sixth century and the epic poem the *Alexandreis* of about 1175 by Walter of Chatillon where the first initials of each of the ten books spelled out his name.

vii It appears that the book was being revised right up to the date of publication since it incorporates material from Perotti's *Cornucopia* published in 1489 and especially from the *Aratea* of Germanicus which was published by Aldus in 1499 immediately prior to the *Hypnerotomachia* from a manuscript "recently discovered".

document dated 1455 attesting to his presence as a novice in the Dominican monastery of San Niccolò in Treviso and a year later he is again mentioned as *cursor*. After a ten year gap, he is referred to again in 1466, in 1467 – when he was appointed specifically to teach novices – in 1469 and in 1472, after which he disappears from the records of the monastery.⁷ On the other hand the acts of the University of Padua speak of accepting Colonna as *baccalaureus* on May 31, 1473 under the deanship of the *magister* Nicolaus de Nicolao de Sicilia. The ten-year interval in the books of the convent of Treviso, which have no gaps, may be partially explained by the absence of any payment by him and partially taken to be a result of his effective absence. If we consider that he reappears in Treviso after a decade as a teacher, and later in Padua gets academic recognition, it is reasonable to assume that his absence in Treviso, between 1456 and 1466 was due to study. By a 1458 decree of the Republic of Venice not only was it established what his subjects were for a doctorate at the University of Padua, but also that he would have to take up residence there so that his absence from school is not unlikely.⁸

viii Francesco Squarcione (1395-1468) was an enthusiastic collector of classical antiquities. In about 1440 he started an art school in Padua and had many celebrated painters as his students including Mantegna. However he fell out with the latter and others since he supposedly sold their paintings as his own.

Was it his impressions of the antiquities of Venice, Treviso and Padua which awakened in him his regret for the disappearance of the ancient grandeur and the desire, when he returned to Treviso, to give to or to infuse new life into it at least through the vision of his imagination? Since the fourteenth century, the monastery of St. Niccolò had had a collection of art, in Padua there were the collections of the texts of Ciriaco, and Squarcione^{viii} had accumulated there works of art and de-

⁷ See the compilation of Popelin cit., p. XCV. About the stay of Colonna in Venice in 1471 it should be noted that Temanza and Marchese (*Memorie de' piu insigni pittori, scultori e architetti domenicani* 2 vols., Bologna 1878) come to different conclusions, even though both are based on the *Liber consiliorum* (from 1450-1524) of the convent of SS. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice. According to Temanza the information on Colonna begins on the 11 November 1481, while Marchese says that the first mention of Colonna is on 11 November 1471. Both authors indicate that the last date is November 8, 1500. The dating of Marchese is surprising, given that Colonna is recorded in Treviso from 1466 to 1472 and finally, the use of the same day of the month suggests a clerical error. The information of Temanza seems also the most reliable since the latter calls Colonna *magister*, a title that would not be justified until after his promotion to *baccalaureus* which occurred in 1473.

⁸ J. B. Thomasimus *Gymnasium Patavium* Utini 1654 p. 391: "decretum fuit a senatu Veneto, reipublicae Venetae subditos in hoc gymnasio sua studia exercere aliosque in alienis academiis litteris incumbentes privilegiis destitui, quibus perfruuntur doctores insignia in Patavinis collegiis consecuti".

sign including even some from Greece, while Venice was a lively point of reference for any ancient object. There is nothing to suggest that Colonna made any other journeys, particularly in view of the fact that the imagination of many poets needs only a little stimulus from the real world. However, voices are never absent which call attention to Colonna's alleged knowledge of the Orient and this is surely a result of the many comments he makes about Egypt. But on closer examination it is clear that any such comments are actually based on extracts from classical authors. And when you see an unusual name, such as Meterea, the place where Mary rested on the flight to Egypt, one can assume that this was a location that was well-known at the time^{ix} Moreover during his life, our author had many contacts with people one knows for sure had traveled in the East. During this same time, Fra Urbano worked as a teacher of novices in the Franciscan monastery in Treviso and he later visited Egypt, Syria and Palestine, while Paolo di Baldassare Trevisano, after he visited these same places, wrote a treatise on the sources of the Nile and the customs of Ethiopia.⁹ It was most likely as a result of conversations with these last that Colonna included in his work terms which came neither from Strabo nor Diodorus, nor Theophrastus nor any other literary source.

It may rather be hypothesized that Colonna knew Sicily and in particular Catania where even today there is an obelisk, erected in the time of Agathocles and placed on an ancient statue of an elephant.^x This may have been the model for one

⁹ *Hypnerotomachia*, fol. h IV^v. On the word "Meterea" see Petrus Martyr ab Anglieira (Anghiera) Mediolensis, *De Babylonica legatione libri III*, Coloniae 1583, p. 436. Peter Martyr, born in 1457, had been sent to the Sultan in Cairo, see G. Lumbroso, *Descrittori Italiani dell'Egitto et di Alexandria*, Rome Petro Martire d'Anghiera 1878, p. 17. See Martyr cit., p. 397, for the definition of Cairo as "Babylonia Aegyptia". Perhaps the attestation of Colonna (fol. b 6) that "the Vatican (obelisk), the Alexandrino, the Babylonici" would be nothing compared to those described by him, does not refer to the obelisks of Babylon. Nevertheless it is possible that he knew the passage of Diodorus, in which it is reported that Semiramis himself had set up one in Babylon. "Babylonici" could also refer to the obelisks located further upstream on the Nile. About Paulo Baldassare Trevisano and Urbano, see Lumbroso cit., pp. 14-15. The first was born in Treviso in 1452 and wrote his work in Cyprus in 1482. The second, born in Belluno around 1443, after his stay in Treviso visited Egypt, Palestine, Arabia and Syria. With reference to the voyages of Urbano, see P. Valeriano, *De infelicitate litteratorum*, Helmstadt 1664, p. 196; L. Doglioni, *Memorie di Urbano Bolzanio dell'ordine de' Minori*, Belluno 1784, p. 15; and Stefano Ticozzi, *Storia dei letterati e degli artisti del Dipartimento della Piave*, vol. I, Belluno 1813, p. 49. Finally, see below the remarks on Fra Urbano's knowledge of the hieroglyphs.

^{ix} Meterea is now Al-Matariyah, five miles north of the center of Cairo. The supposed Tree of Mary can still be seen. See Stefan Halikowski Smith, 'Meanings behind myths: the multiple manifestations of the Tree of the Virgin at Matara', *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 23, 2, (2008) 101-128.

^x This statue is now known as *u Liotru*, a phonetic change from the name Heliodorus, a legendary character who is said to have ridden the elephant to Constantinople. Traditionally, the obelisk had been brought from Syene, a city in Egypt close to Aswan. The elephant is made from local basalt and is of unknown age. Agathocles was the tyrant of Syracuse and then King of Sicily who at one stage captured Catania, expelled its inhabitants and repopulated it. The city has been subject to numerous earthquakes and buried by the lava of Mount Etna at least seven times. After an earthquake in the late 17th century, the damaged elephant was restored and in 1737 the obelisk which had originally been located elsewhere was placed by the architect Vaccarini in its present position on the back of the elephant. Colonna cannot therefore have got his inspiration from Catania – it may very well have been the other way round. Bernini's obelisk of the Pharaoh Apries (589-570 BCE) on an elephant outside Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome was erected in 1667 and may have been influenced by Colonna. See W. B. Heckscher, 'Bernini's Elephant and Obelisk', *The Art Bulletin*, (1947) 29.3 p. 155 for a full discussion.

of the woodcuts of *Hypnerotomachia* (see fig. 15). Several factors appear to support the hypothesis of a similar trip: the visit to Messina by Constantine Lascaris, the well-known teacher of Greek whose lectures were later also attended by Bembo, together with the knowledge that Colonna shows of the antiquities of Ravenna and of an altar found in Taranto. This reflects the stages of a typical journey to the south. By contrast, the stay in Catania seems contradicted by the fact that the above mentioned obelisk is octagonal in shape, while in the engraving it is quadrangular. This difference could be explained by just assuming a bad memory or some arbitrariness which in Colonna's case would hardly give cause for wonder and this would just be a formal change. And yet it is very likely that the author had thought of giving his work the form of some kind of travel guide, unless it was a picture of an elephant with a tower on its back, common on Italian silver coins, that gave him the idea to replace it with an obelisk.¹⁰

A stay in Rome by Colonna can be argued on more definite grounds. It is certainly true that since the time of the visit of Petrarch^{xi} to the Eternal City elegiac observations on the ancient ruins had been widely diffused, so that the tone of bitter regret which is indulged in in the *Hypnerotomachia* could be due to

^{xi} Petrarch's first visit to Rome was in 1336.

¹⁰ Constantin Lascaris was in Messina in the mid-sixties of the fifteenth century, a city in which by 1466 he would finish his work *De constructione verborum*. Bembo went to see him in 1492. The passages in Colonna on Ravenna are in fol. oII, those on Taranto in fol. pVIII. On the relationship between Catania and Egyptian taste in the Ptolemaic age see A. Holm, *Das alte Catania*, Lübeck 1873. On the antiquities found there see Houel, *Voyage pittoresque des isles de Sicile*, vol. II, Paris 1784, p. 148; pl. 143 contains a picture of an obelisk, while the German translation (vol. II, p. 213, Gotha 1801) has no illustrations. Pietro Carrera, *Delle Memorie storiche della città di Catania*, vol. I, Catania 1639, p. 104, described the obelisk as octagonal and claims that it had previously served as a lintel of a portal of the episcopal palace. The author does not mention the elephant, but said that it was the heraldic animal of Catania. According to a manuscript, edited by Philippe d'Orville in his *Sicula*, Amsterdam: 1764, p. XXIII, the obelisk was discovered in 1620. The anonymous author, who wrote after 1697, does not speak of an elephant. In any case, see Houel and Holm cit. about the large eruptions of Etna in the years 1444, 1474 and 1536-1537. It is possible that the elephant had existed at the time of Colonna and then was buried, as it seems to have been the symbol of the Sicilian city even before Colonna. The symbol misleads the anonymous writer, who describes the obelisk of the Piazza della Minerva, erected after 1667 on a marble elephant, as originating in Catania. In his work on obelisks Zoega cites the elephant from a letter of 1793 by Camillo Borgia judging it to be modern. This is contradicted by the reproduction of Houel and judgement of modern connoisseurs. As for Italian silver coins, see F. Imhoof-Blumer, *Thier-und Pflanzenbilder auf Münzen und Gemmen des classischen Alterthums*, Leipzig 1889, pl. IV, no. 4.

such literary models. The fact remains that a thorough knowledge of old buildings can be explained only through direct experience accompanied by measurements, calculations and drawings obtained from repeated visits. In fact, only in Rome could Colonna find such a number of obelisks and those innumerable, more or less authentic, hieroglyphs such as those he employs in the *Hypnerotomachia*. Indeed, it would be easy to believe that he visited such a mine of information more than once for his studies. And that could have happened in the decade between 1456 and 1466, given the close relationship that existed at that time between his hometown and the Roman Curia.

Cardinal Pierio Barbo in his splendid Roman court at the Palazzo San Marco, full of coins and antiquities, formed a circle in which his fellow Venetians gathered, especially the clergy of Treviso, of which Marco Barbo, nephew of Pierio, was bishop between 1455 and 1464 and formed a part.¹¹ After the latter had been elected to the papal throne with the name Paul II, Teodoro de Lelli, who was no less influential in the Roman court than his nephew the Pope, assumed the duties of Marco on September 17, 1464. From 1451 Teodoro had demonstrated extraordinary legal talents, particularly when he was involved with the Maid of Orleans during a trip to France in the company of Cardinal d'Estouteville. Already favored by Nicholas II, he also took advantage of the benevolence of Pius II, who appointed him bishop of Feltre on January 15, 1462. Paul II, on the basis of a legal opinion of Teodoro, had declared invalid the electoral accord with the Cardinals^{xii} and thereafter treated the latter as his most trusted adviser. But scarcely had Teodoro been appointed cardinal when he suddenly died before the publication of the title.¹²

There is no doubt that the remarks in the second book of the *Hypnerotomachia* where Polia claims to be of the family of Lelia allude to the family of Teodoro de Lelli. According to this extract the Roman Consul Lelio Sylvio had married the only heir to a prince of the March of Treviso with the name of Butanechio,

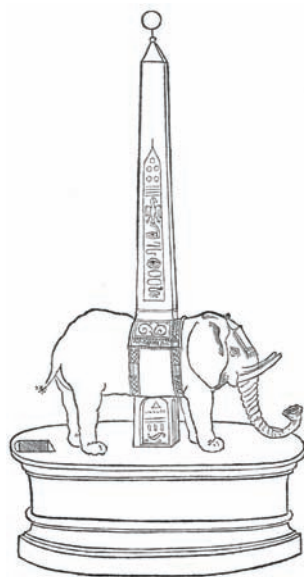


Fig. 15 Woodcut from Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* – Aldus 1499 – *The obsidian elephant*

^{xii} Before the Conclave an accord on church reform had been reached among the cardinals. Paul II on his election renegotiated this accord but even this he largely ignored in favor of his own dictatorial objectives.

¹¹ See Pastor, vol. II cit., p. 367.

¹² See Sägmüller cit., p. 16. The inscription on his tomb in Santa Maria Nuova reports that he lived 37 years, 11 months and 22 days, and that a certain Lelio "pridie kl. Apr. faciendum curavit" in 1466. Gams, *Series episcoporum Ecclesiae Catholicae*, adds a "circa" for the date of death. Indeed, the inscription does not oblige us to consider this specified date of his death as the real one. In contrast, V. Forcella, *Iscrizioni delle chiese e d'altri edifici di Roma del secolo XI fin ai giorni nostri*, Rome: 1869-1884, vol. II, p. 10 gives the year 1465 for the sepulchral inscription and thus certainly provides an earlier date. Sägmüller indicates a date of death March 31, 1466.

giving rise to the *gens* Lelia. The heir, Lelius Maurus, would be first transferred to Terni and would then return to the ancestral land in the Veneto to found Treviso. If we neglect the fantastic additions of Colonna, these dates correspond to those suggested by modern research on the Lelli family. Although born in Terni, Teodoro had a Venetian father, recorded in Padua in 1449 as *sacerdotalis juri civilis promotor*. His son had returned to Venice in 1462 as papal representative and there he remained until March the following year. Since Polia traces the history of her family until this time, that is until 1462, you might think that during this period Teodoro had given Colonna the task of composing a family chronicle going back to Roman times as was then customary. Colonna also mentions the name of an ancestor of Teodoro, and gives credibility in such a context to the remarks of Dr. Niccolò Mauro according to which Teodoro Lelli on his mother's side was descended from a certain Titus Butanichius, which would strengthen the hypothesis that the name Polia itself is actually the transformation of a name taken honorifically and contemporaneously from the Lelli family.¹³

After his return from France and except for his Venetian mission between 1462 and 1463 and an additional journey to France between September 1463 and 1464, Teodoro de Lelli had always remained close to the Curia. It is therefore possible that Colonna could have visited in Rome his famous compatriot who was just a few years older than him. Moreover, additional opportunities to meet Lelli may have occurred when he was bishop of Treviso, which the latter administered from Rome. Indeed, one can say with certainty that Colonna had been in contact with the entourage of Lelli all the time he was alive. The fact that Colonna reappears in Treviso in 1464, the year of Teodoro's death, is more than mere coincidence.

Back at the convent of St. Niccolò, our author therefore had to collect together everything he had seen, studied and of which he had direct experience during the previous decade. Still under the powerful impression of Roman antiquities, he, in that unique and fantastic work, the *Hypnerotomachia*, ended by composing the genealogical research done for the Lelli family.^{xiii} Of course, he continued to work on this for decades but it is equally certain that during that period, he had time to think about the work. So when Colonna gives the definite date

^{xiii} The remarks on the Lelli family in Book II fols. A2 and A3 certainly read like a family history but they only take up two pages of the book.

¹³ In the *Hypnerotomachia* Lelio Sylvio is mentioned on fol. AII, Teramo is cited on fol. AIII and fol. AIII^r with the year 1462; on Tito Butanechio see ch. 4 nt. 6 above.

as the Kalends of May 1467, he refers to the first draft that was later the basis of his monumental work.

☞ *The hieroglyphs of Colonna and Roman antiquities*

Francesco Colonna studied in detail the promising ruins of ancient Egypt which were found in Rome where, albeit in a climate of hostility towards the Roman Academy, he showed an equal enthusiasm for antiquities. In this regard it is worth remembering that Paul II had a particular passion for cameos and medals, and preferred to spend time weighing and classifying them. For members of the Curia who wanted to support him, the interpretation of the symbols of these numismatic objects, mistaken for hieroglyphics, was certainly for them a more important interest in their research. No wonder that in the *Hypnerotomachia* hieroglyphs have an important role. At the time they were a recurring theme, and even today you can see how Colonna, in the creation of these hieroglyphs, had taken up the questions which were the subject of such lively discussions in Rome. The assumptions, solutions and proposals advanced by him, albeit cautiously presented in the guise of a dream, had an actuality that must have been clearly felt by his contemporaries.

It has already been addressed in detail how Paul II had resumed the project of Nicholas V of transferring the Vatican obelisk from its original location to St. Peter's Basilica. It therefore seems reasonable to suppose that there was uncovered in the course of these projects the lower part of the obelisk, the bronze lions, which provided such wonderful information. The holes in the base, which certainly came to light on that occasion, if not previously known, have sparked debate on those passages of the *Mirabilia* according to which at the base there were found bronze tablets with inscriptions in Latin in honor of Julius Caesar, whose ashes were kept in the sphere located on the top of the obelisk^{14, xiv} Moving on from the sug-

^{xiv} Martin V was Pontiff from 1417 to 1431. Presumably the Signorelli referred to by Giehlow is Luca Signorelli the artist. He mostly painted religious scenes and I have been unable to locate any reference to Caesar in his works except in the Triumph of Chastity in the National Gallery in London where Caesar and Scipio Africanus are onlookers.

¹⁴ See Jordan cit., p. 624. The *Mirabilia Romae* refers to it, "juxta quod est memoria Caesaris est, id est agulia, ubi splendide cinis ejus in suo sarcophago requiescit; sicut eo vivente totus mundus ei subjectus fuit, ita eo mortuo usque in finem subicitur. Cuius memoria inferius ornata fuit tabulis eneis et deauratis, litteris latinis decenter depicta, superino vero ad malum, ubi requiescit et pretiosis lapidibus decoratur, ubi scriptum est: 'Caesar tantum eras, quantus et orbis, / sed nunc in modico clauderis antro.' Et haec memoria sacrata fuit suo more, sicut adhuc apparet et legitur". These descriptions of the twelfth century are an integral part of the works of a certain Signorelli, who lived at the time of Martin V. On the question of the twenty-four rectangular holes on the bottom of the obelisk see Winkelmann cit., p. 241. They are hidden from view by garlands of flowers and eagles.

gestion which emerged from these discussions, Colonna inserted in his fantastic composition the description of an obelisk dedicated to Julius Caesar by the Egyptians, upon the base of which Poliphilo admires the “sculptured hieroglyphs” in a square and four circles.

On the rectangle on the front (See fig. 16) Colonna saw laid out the following hieroglyphs: “an eye, two ears of wheat tied crosswise, an antique scimitar, then two wheat-flails crossed over a circle and beribboned, a globe and a rudder. Then there was an ancient vase, out of which sprang an olive-branch adorned with fruits. There followed a broad plate, two ibises, six coins in a circle, and lastly two plumb-lines.” From this Poliphilo infers the meaning of the dedicatory inscription: *Divo Julio Caesari semper augusto totius orbis gubernatori ob animi clementiam et liberalitatem Aegypti communi aere s. erexere* [To the Divine and ever-august Julius Caesar, governor of the whole world; for the clemency and liberality of his soul, the Egyptians have erected this from their public funds].¹⁵ In the medallion above it, as well as in others, the hieroglyphs are not aligned to each other, but are instead placed in a more or less rigid ornamental structure. In particular, in the first medallion the signs are related thus: “A pair of scales, between which there was a plate. In the triangles between the beam and the edge of the plate there was a dog on one side and a serpent on the other. Beneath it was an antique coffer from which an unsheathed sword arose. Its point went beyond the bar of the scales, and passed through a royal crown.”^{16,xv} In this image, the viewer can read the sentence: “*Justitia recta amicitia et odio evaginata et nuda et ponderata liberalitas regnum firmiter servat*” [Lawful justice, unsheathed and free from love and hate and well-considered liberality firmly preserve the kingdom], while the complete signification of the medallion on one of the two sides contains the following hieroglyphs: “A caduceus with serpents, and at the lower end of its rod, to either side there was an ant growing into an elephant.

^{xv} Although the passage from Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit, fol. 315 is on the topic of the sword he does not discuss justice. There is a picture of Justice but she holds a *fascies* (however without the traditional axe) being the symbol of the magistrates of Rome, rather than a sword. In the usual interpretation, the balance or *libra* represents the equality of justice and the sword the severity of justice.

¹⁵ See *Hypnerotomachia*, fol. pVI ff. With regard to the representation of Caesar with a sword, see Valeriano *Hieroglyphica* cit, fol. 315^v. As he argues, this hieroglyphic form is derived from Iamblichus; for the olive branch as a symbol of “mansuetudo”, equivalent then to “forgiveness”, see *ibid.*, fol. 386^v. In respect of the symbol of the plate as “liberalitas” see fol. 408, an interpretation that Valeriano believes is satisfactory because it has similarities with the *modius* of Osiris interpreted as “opulent”. See below some observations regarding the hieroglyphs of Valeriano.

¹⁶ The sword here means “justice”, the balance “weighted”; see Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit, fol. 315.

Similarly at the upper end there were two elephants diminishing into ants. Between these on one side was a vase containing fire, and on the other a shell of water". Poliphilo reads the following line: "pace ac concorde parvae res crescunt, discordia maximae discrecunt". [Through peace and concord, small things increase, through discord, great ones diminish].¹⁷ On the third medallion (see fig. 17) there was the following hieroglyph, "An anchor crossing it sideways, with a spread-winged eagle perching on it and a rope wound around its shaft. Beneath these images sat a warrior surrounded by weapons and looking at a snake that he was holding". According to Poliphilo it means "militaris prudentia seu disciplina imperii est tenacissimum vinculum" [Military prudence or discipline is the strongest bond of the empire] while on the back of the obelisk there seems to have been inscribed the symbols of a fourth medallion, "a triumphal trophy, with two crossed palm-branches at the bottom of its lance. Two horns of plenty rose up, also tied to it. In the middle there was an eye on one side and a comet on the other" which according to Poliphilo means: "Divi Julii victoriarum et spoliolum copiosissimum trophaeum seu insignia" [The rich trophy or insignia of the victories and spoils of divine Julius]. In accordance with his love of gigantic proportions that are demonstrated in his fantastic architecture, the magnificence of this obelisk according to Colonna of course surpassed the monoliths transported from Thebes and the Circus Maximus. Stripping the description of poetic license and taking it out of its fictional context it seems clear that through this Colonna intended to

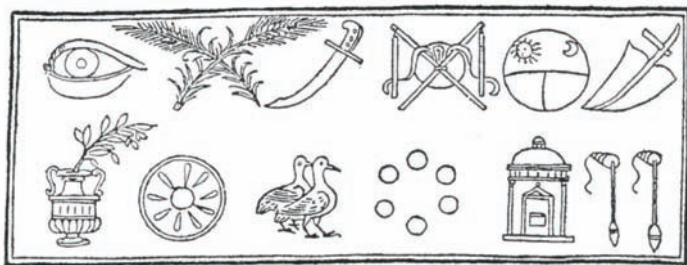


Fig. 16 Hieroglyph from Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* – Aldus 1499 – *To the divine Caesar*

¹⁷ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 19, where the motto and the symbolic representation is discussed in a comprehensive manner; with respect to the caduceus as a symbol of "harmony" and "pax", see fol. 115". There is additional detail on the coin of Vespasian with the inscription "pax" on fol. 343 related to a container filled with water and another full of fire as a hieroglyph of "discord". It seems that the whole representation is inspired by the motto "Elephantus e culice"; see B. A. Poliziano, *Opera*, Basileae 1553, p. 174.

take a position on the issue which at that time must have been much debated of why the Vatican obelisk had originally been erected. Even if this one, unlike the others, was lacking hieroglyphic inscriptions and although it was hardly considered a tomb, at least according to what is claimed in the *Mirabilia*,¹⁸ it is not unlikely that the debate was focused on the possibility that it had been erected in honor of Caesar rather than to the Egyptian kings. Colonna, with his obelisk also having uninscribed sides, probably wanted to confirm this hypothesis, while emphasizing at the same time that the inscription was probably on the lost brass plates. Contrary to what the *Mirabilia* suggested however, he seems to assume that these inscriptions were of hieroglyphs,¹⁹ as shown by the sculptures of the base that he designed himself. Such an obelisk represents the culmination of the experiences of Colonna in Rome, and since he describes it in detail, one gets the impression that he had really discovered, or at least that he had read about one of these obelisks in an unknown report of some classical author.



Fig 17. Hieroglyph from Colonna's
Hypnerotomachia Poliphili –
Aldus 1499 – Military prudence

To design the hieroglyphs on the base, Colonna worked on a wide range of antiquarian and literary material, of which I will discuss only a few examples here in detail, while for the rest I will give as much information as possible in the notes. If we analyze the method followed by Colonna, we note first that, contrary to what had happened earlier, he strives to use true Egyptian hieroglyphics for his own enigmatic script. From this point of view there is no doubt about the two ibis lined up one after another: Colonna must have seen them on the obelisks lying in the Sallustian Gardens or along the Via Appia or in the Circus. Even the circles, shown individually or in groups, resemble ele-

¹⁸ See the guide to Muffel dating back to 1452, in Michaelis, *Le Antichità*, cit., p. 16.

¹⁹ Even Winckelmann held this view; cit., p. 241.

ments that frequently appear in Egyptian hieroglyphic writing.²⁰ And the eye, snakes and sword can be traced back to the same source. That these elements were designed in a modern style, is explained by the characteristic incapacity of the Renaissance to identify these elements in an uncertain figurative world.

The copious collections of coins that were kept in Rome^{xvi} must have offered Colonna a further opportunity to find symbols to use as models for his hieroglyphs. Because their shape corresponded to that of medallions it can be assumed that the main source for these compositions derived from them. Thus, for example, the cornucopia, depicted alone on trophies or combined with the caduceus, was a popular decorative motif on Roman imperial coins. Especially on those of Augustus, a comet accompanied by the inscription “divos Julius” memorialized such an event during his reign. On coins of Nero and Claudius there can also be found a balance either isolated or suspended. It seems that the motif of the medallion shown here (fig. 17) is Rome in armor seated on weapons an image that is found on coins on innumerable occasions. Even for the hieroglyphs of the rectangle, Colonna took coins as a model; for example on the reverse of one which portrays Caesar’s head there can be seen a rudder, a globe, a cornucopia, a caduceus and a priestly hat. On one coin of Augustus²¹ there are ears of corn knotted together and also on the coins of this era vessels are often depicted. In our case, the addition of a branch and a bowl to the

^{xvi} See John Cunnally, *Images of the Illustrious. The Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance*, Princeton University Press, 1999. See also the commentary of Pozzi-Ciapponi, p. 238 (vol. 2 p. 179). They do not believe that these symbols were based on coins.



²⁰ On the pair of ibis as Egyptian hieroglyphs, see Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 127: “eas (ibes geminae) in hujusmodi significatum passim in obeliscis vides;” with respect to “numismata in circo” see fol. 287: “orbiculi quidam numismatum speciem referentis, quos aliquot pyramidibus et obeliscis excisos videas, pecuniam indicant in opere construendo erogata.”

²¹ On the comet as a symbol of Caesar, see Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 330: “fuerunt autem ex junioribus nonnulli, qui per stellam tantum Julium Caesarem intelligi voluerint picturis publicatis. Verum haec consignificat, non simpliciter significat,” where he talks about the coins of Augustus with the inscription “divos Julius”. With regard to works represented on coins chronologically close to the *Hypnerotomachia*, see G. du Choul, *Discours de la religion des anciens Romains*, Lyon 1556; the caduceus is treated on pp. 16 and 153, the scale on p. 118; see also the copper engravings accompanying Augustinus cit., Pl. III, no. 7 and 8, rudder, globe, cornucopia, caduceus and ‘apex’ are given in Plate. VII, nos. 13, 14 (ears of wheat), Plate XX, no. 16 (Rome armed), pl. LIII (trophy).

Fig. 18. Part of an ancient temple frieze, no. 104 in the Nuova descrizione del Museo Capitolino, Rome 1888: original height .59m, length 2.47m.

side may refer to another source, an ancient frieze which, as we shall see below, for Colonna had an even greater importance.

The enigmatic images of the base of the obelisk contain, in addition to the symbols that can be recognized as authentic Egyptian hieroglyphs or taken from coins, some symbols clearly invented by the author, who, following the same process used by the Egyptians for the construction of the determinative of names, restricted himself to show the object which he wished to indicate: a ribbon thus signifies "vinculum", a temple "s(acrum)", a crown "regnum", a drawn sword "evaginata" and so on. In this way, the author adds to images that have an arbitrary meaning: two plumb-lines indicate the predicate "erexerunt" [they built], two flails the name "Augustus".²² This departure from classic symbolism occurs only when the author does not have a model to represent the ancient word that he wishes to express.

In these last cases the invented sign of course also implies naturally what is signified. However, in most examples of the hieroglyphs the choice of the word used by Colonna is not simple. And this also applies for symbols borrowed from coins that show how he must have followed in their interpretation the sense that the text on the coins seemed to refer to: "pax" [peace] for the caduceus, "Divus Julius" [Divine Julius] for the comet, "invicto" [unconquered] for the trophy. And when the author does not find such an inscription on a coin rightly or wrongly referring to the symbol, then he builds on the literal meaning of the image with acute and refined reflections based on passages from the classical authors. Thus the famous passage of Herodotus concerning the cost of the pyramids seems to have given him the idea of perceiving money in the image of the rings while his remarks regarding the presence of the ibis in Egypt must have induced him to consider this bird as a symbol of the whole country. A particular example of learned reasoning is the hieroglyph of the circle that for Colonna had the meaning of "always" and on which Erasmus specifically wrote a commentary. Given Colonna's vast knowledge it can be assumed that this interpretation of the circle was derived from Virgil, Servius and Diodorus; it is also possible that he had heard about the snake coiled in a circle that according to Hora-

²² See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 355: "Juniorum inventum est, per flagella duo frumentaria in transversum alterius alterum posita Augustus mensem indicare . . . Sedenim cum non eadem sit regionibus omnibus trituriandi ratio, hieroglyphicum hoc iis tantum inserviet, quibus id instrumenti usui est"; on "perpendicularum" as a symbol of "erexerunt" see. fol. 268.



Fig. 19 The coin of the Emperor Titus

pollo symbolizes “aevum” [age].^{xvii} In any event, one should notice the attempt to explain the ancient signs on the basis of the same ancient interpretations. And although Egyptian, Greek and Roman elements are intermixed, in this case the beginning of a certain capacity for abstraction is evident. Consequently, only a few explanations rely on medieval concepts: for example the dog for “friendship”, the snake for “hatred” or “prudence”.

It is noteworthy that Colonna, in composing and making these inscriptions in honor of Caesar, has tried to avoid anachronisms. With the opening words of that part of the inscription from the imperial era that had been preserved on the base of the Vatican obelisk, that is, with the words “divo Julio”, he composed the beginning of the dedication with hieroglyphs which referred to Caesar’s successful campaigns in Egypt. And even the motto of Sallust, depicted in the second medallion, does not stray too far chronologically from this event. Colonna was criticized for the incorrect formulation of an epigram, an objection which does not take into account that the literal meaning of the inscription on the obelisk transmitted by Ermapione was completely different.^{xviii} Evidently he was able to adduce the Roman point of view and not just the Egyptian one.

It is typical of Colonna that, after having carefully analyzed what he was referring to from the age of the Caesars, he also adopted the symbol of an anchor around which is wrapped a dolphin (see fig. 19).^{23, xix} This is an image that appears on some silver coins of Titus, but not in the decoration of one of the medallions of the obelisk. The symbol can be seen rather in another series of hieroglyphs that have no connection with Caesar, and which are formed by “a circle, and an anchor around whose shaft a dolphin was entwined”. In this composition can be seen the famous motto of Augustus, “ἀεὶ Σπεῦδε βραδέως, semper festina

^{xvii} Giehlow is mistaken here. Horapollon depicts eternity by the sun and the moon (I.1) and the universe (I.2) by the snake coiled in a circle. Certainly this latter in other contexts is used to signify eternity.

^{xviii} See above ch. 2 nt. xx.

^{xix} See also ch. 5 nt. xxxix below for further discussion of the coins of Domitian and Titus. The coin from Oropus referred to in nt. 23 is from the 2nd century and is in the British Museum.

²³ The anchor with a dolphin is depicted on coins of Domitian, while on a Greek coin of Oropus a dolphin is wrapped around a trident; see Springer’s essay in *Zeitschrift für Numismatik* XXI (1898), pl. IV, no. 10. Coins of Titus were also in the collection of Paul II, see E. Müntz, *Les arts à la cour des papes pendant les XV-XVI siècles*, vol. 1, Paris 1878, p. 268.

^{xx} See note xxx below for remarks on the ox-skull and the hanging branches. In the earliest times, the actual skulls of the sacrificial animals and their garlands were placed on the exterior of the temple.

^{xxi} See Costas Panayotakis 'Vision and Light in Apuleius' Tale of Psyche and Her Mysterious Husband', *The Classical Quarterly*, NS (2001), 51, 2 pp. 576-583 which has good bibliographic information.

lente" [Always hasten slowly]. This is therefore not connected to the obelisk of Caesar, but rather to the passage in which there is described a grandiose bridge on the parapet of which there is the inscription "some noble Egyptian hieroglyphs depicting the following: an antique helmet crested with a dog's head, a ox-skull^{xx} with two fine-leafed branches tied to its horns, and an ancient lamp", which he interprets as follows: "Patience is the ornament, guardian and protector of life." (see the woodcut of 'Hypnerotomachia, reproduced here in fig. 20, which mistakenly has placed the two hieroglyphs one above the other).

Even these hieroglyphs do no more than paraphrase the motto placed there and emphasize the principles that signified the secret of the greatness of Rome: tenacious patience and the conduct of prudent policy. With this choice Colonna expresses the correctness of the appropriate ethics through symbolic images and he takes care to present it as inherited wisdom transmitted through the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt. The idea of using the dog as a decoration for the helmet had probably already been suggested by the passages already cited from Diodorus and Eusebius, who had said that the Egyptians honored this animal as the "custodiendi causa" [for the sake of protection]. Thanks to Apuleius it was known that the lamp was a popular Egyptian cult-object,^{xxi} and Plutarch had provided

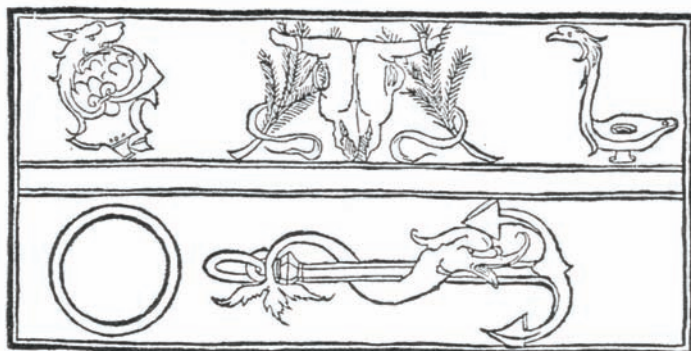


Fig. 20 Hieroglyphs from Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* – Aldus 1499 – Patience

references about its symbolic significance as life itself. The hieroglyph of the ox appears frequently on Roman obelisks, while on the obelisks of the Pantheon and of the Villa Mattei, there are figures of bulls. Macrobius also has referred to these. I have already spoken earlier about the symbol of the circle.

In order to make an adequate interpretation of this series of hieroglyphs, which will become clear following a logical progression, Colonna pretends that Poliphilo is puzzled about the

meaning of the branches that hang from the skull and only after many pages²⁴ does he resolve the problem with the help of the nymph Logistica, the personification of reason, who in the meantime has joined Poliphilo. One of the two branches is a fir, the other a larch. Together they have the meaning of "patience, which is not readily inflamed to anger nor gives way in adversity since larch wood, fashioned into a beam does not bend, while the wood of the fir does not easily catch fire". The analogy with Alberti is striking in this context. He also interprets the ancient legend of the larch, according to which it can withstand the onslaught of fire in the same way that Colonna describes the characteristics of the tree. Thus, even by recourse to these natural characteristics, he tries to explain to the reader the positive significance of the rules of life of the Romans through a symbolism that even embraces material for sculpture.

The symbols of the Augustan motto,^{xxii} derived from the coins of Titus, are then correlated with those hieroglyphs which aimed to convey to humanists the impression of an ancient priestly wisdom. The question remains why Colonna has avoided any reference to the historical significance of these symbols, providing only the simple correlation between them and the obelisk of Julius Caesar and why he makes the relationship with the coin of Titus more difficult, by showing the anchor in a horizontal position? Perhaps it is because the interpretation of those symbols as imperial mottos had already become quite common among scholars as a result of the passages of Aulus Gellius and Macrobius. All this is supported by the popularity of such coins as objects of collection and also by the widespread dissemination of these two classical authors. Thus in a letter dated October 14, 1499 addressed to Alberto Pio da Carpi, Aldus, countering accusations of *tarditas*, said the dolphin and the anchor were still his constant companions, and adds: "ut oportere ajunt" [as they are accustomed to say], evidence that shows the proverbial use of these symbols. Later Pierio Valeriano notes that these were symbols whose meaning was known even to barbers!^{25,xxiii}

Certainly Colonna frequently inserted in his work what he

xxii The motto *festina lente* is not shown on the coin of Titus although the symbols, the dolphin and the anchor are. The source of Colonna's inspiration (and thus Aldus for his printer's mark) for putting motto and symbols together is still an open question which may explain Colonna's reluctance to make further reference to the matter.

xxiii I would not agree that Dorez' argument is "convincing" on this point. Firmin-Didot in his French translation of the passage in *Alde Manuce at l'Helénisme a Venise*. Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1875, 129 omits the phrase "ut oportere ajunt" entirely which makes more sense as a passing comment on Aldus' metaphorical use of the words "constant companions".

²⁴ *Hypnerotomachia* fol h7.

²⁵ Regarding the letter from Aldus, see L. Dorez, 'Etudes Aldine', *Revue des bibliothèques*, VI (1896), p. 144. Dorez demonstrates convincingly that Aldus, using the words "ut oportere ajunt", refers not so much to the illustration of the *Hypnerotomachia*, but as a way of indicating what was already common knowledge before the publication of the work. The passage of Valeriano is cited in *Hieroglyphica* fol. 196 and 335^v.

had read, seen or heard in person, but all the same he never neglected to make changes or links to his new and stimulating association of ideas. If he had adopted that symbol from the obelisk of Caesar he introduced nothing new and merely furnishes additional testimony regarding its existence at the time of Caesar. This symbol takes on a meaning with a different emphasis, that which Poliphilo had seen through Egyptian hieroglyphs whose origins are lost in the mists of time. Thus Erasmus could convince himself that this motto of Caesar had originated "ex ipsius usque priscae philosophiae mysteriis" [from the mysteries of ancient philosophy].²⁶

Erasmus was wrong to believe that these hieroglyphs were taken from the treatise of Chaeremon,^{xxiv} but he had a fortunate intuition because Colonna, despite the absence of information derived from the classics but thanks to the belief that the anchor and dolphin was an Egyptian hieroglyph, argued that the motto of the Caesars was taken from this last. In fact, another fragment of the frieze already mentioned contains images that could certainly lead one to believe this. All this, however, I will deal with when we discuss Colonna's next enigmatic inscription, where there is even more reliance on this relief.

If the description by Colonna of the hieroglyphs just considered and their links with the age of the Caesars and the wise maxims of the Romans corresponded well to the interest of the humanists in history, the obelisk pictured above located on the back of an elephant (see fig. 15) seems to have been accepted in the *Hypnerotomachia* primarily for its architectural significance. If we assume that Colonna had been stimulated to imagine this strange construction from the antiquities of Catania^{xxv} or from coins, it becomes very likely that the planning of the first stage of his work was during the time of his stay in Rome, that is, before 1466. Just think of the great projects of the Roman architects who wanted to place the Vatican obelisk on bronze statues, another of

^{xxiv} For Chaeremon, see ch. 1, nts. 28 and xxx, xxxi above.

^{xxv} For the statue in Catania see ch. 4 nt. x above.

²⁶ Erasmus cit., fol. 112^v: "Scripsit his de rebus et Chaeremon apud Graecos, testimonio Suidae, cujus ex libris excerpta suspicor ea, quae nos nuper cospeximus hujus generis monimenta, in quibus etiam haec inerat pictura: primo loco circulus, deinde ancora, quam mediam, ut dixi, delphinus obtorto corpore circumplectitur. Circulus, ut indicabat interpretamentum, quoniam nullo fruitur termino, sempiternum innuit tempus; ancora, quoniam navim remorat, tarditatem, delphinus quod hoc nullum aliud animal celerius . . . velocitatem exprimit." The author cites Aulus Gellius, Macrobius, Suetonius as authorities for the use by Augustus of the motto "festina lente", see Aulus Gellius, *Noctes atticae*, X, 11, and Macrobius cit., VI, 8. Dorez cit., pp. 148 ff., deals in a comprehensive manner with this passage from Erasmus and he also discusses here the greater part of the latter's treatise.



Fig. 21 Part of an ancient temple frieze, no. 105 in the *Nuova descrizione del Museo Capitolino*, Rome 1888: original height .59m, length 2.24m

which was planned for the top of the obelisk, an idea echoed in the enormous pyramidal construction of Colonna also dominated by an obelisk bearing a bronze figure on the summit.²⁷ Based on the former woodcut we are led to think that the author had as a model an obelisk covered with hieroglyphs that was in the neighborhood of the Pigna or else positioned in the Capitol. In fact, while the drawings and descriptions of the sides of the obelisk in honor of Caesar reveal hieroglyphs, on the obelisk with the elephant only scarcely visible traces were noticeable which only reveal an echo of hieroglyphs actually seen and which therefore constitute a first attempt to provide a printed reproduction.

Moreover, this part of *Hypnerotomachia* seems to contain other of Colonna's memories of the Rome of the time because the colossal bronze statue which was visited by Poliphilo from within was a fantastic reconstruction of the giant bronze hand holding a ball which at the time could be found in the Palazzo dei Conservatori.^{xxvi} Even in this case the author's imagination added to his observations just as he was prompted by the restoration projects of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, then in a poor state of preservation, to sketch a bronze horse on which putti were climbing.^{xxvii} Colonna had probably been induced by the proposal to transfer the Vatican obelisk, followed by the pope personally, to propose a new placement of other obelisks. This dream was taken seriously by posterity and an obelisk found at the Minerva was placed on a marble elephant. And that was two centuries after Colonna had expressed his singular idea.²⁸

xxvi This hand and the ball which is in fact a globe is still to be seen in the Palazzo dei Conservatori, one of the Capitoline Museums.

xxvii The equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius has no putti. More likely the inspiration was the marble recubans described below by Giehlow (ch. 5 nts. 74.liii) which has sixteen putti.

²⁷ *Hypnerotomachia* cit., fol. a VIII^r. On the pyramid of Parian marble was placed the obelisk "made from mottled red Theban stone, smooth and polished as bright as a mirror. Egyptian hieroglyphs were finely carved on its faces". This very clear description of Egyptian obelisks shows very well that Colonna had studied the originals. The hieroglyphs of the obelisks on the pyramids are not described.

²⁸ About the condition of the Campidoglio at the time, see Gregorovius cit., vol. VII, p. 560. As for the restoration of the equestrian sculpture of Marcus Aurelius see Müntz cit., vol. II, Paris 1879, p. 92; regarding the location of the

xxviii The Renaissance architect also known as Aristotle who had prepared the original plans for the transport and erection of the Vatican obelisk. See p. 70 above.

xxix Giehlow's reference to Ammianus in the previous note is a slip, since there is no such reference in the *Hypnerotomachia*. For the elephant statue in Catania, see ch. 4 nt. x above.

The starting point of the project which we have discussed represented the ambition of every Renaissance architect conscious of the stimulating passage in Ammianus on the transport of obelisks, a passage that our author quotes almost literally. In the transport of that huge mass which Ridolfo Fioravante degli Alberti^{xxviii} had proposed to implement, Colonna sees as one of the greatest undertakings of the genius of humanity; "I want you to know" – said Logistica to Poliphilo – "that this huge device could not have been made without the most admirable human ingenuity, intense study and incredible diligence such as would perplex any mind that would try to understand this divine idea".^{29,xxix} Colonna's project is therefore an invitation to his contemporaries, who from this point of view must be worthy of antiquity, and it became a symbol of the emulation by contemporary artists

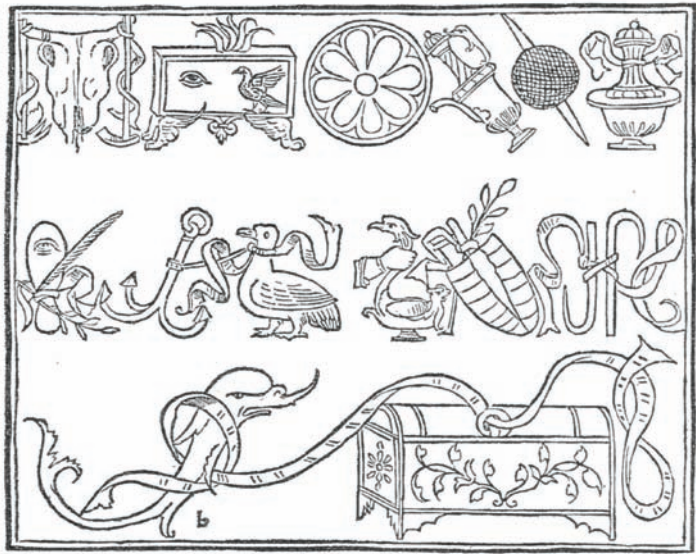


Fig. 22 Hieroglyphs from Colonnas *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* – Aldus 1499 – Sacrifice freely

obelisk of Minerva see Reber cit., p. 255, where he does not mention the connection between *Hypnerotomachia* and the erection of the obelisk which took place in 1667. According to Reber, Bernini chose the elephant as a base because of an observation made about his own celebrity during his trip to France.

²⁹ *Hypnerotomachia* cit., fol. hVT^r, for the precise explanation of the elephant and the obelisk see fol. bVT^r ff. The elephant is a blackish rock that contains gold and silver, the obelisk "of greenish Lacedaemonian stone". Even the square stone on which the elephant is placed has "Egyptian characters beautifully drawn on three of its faces". There is a detailed description of the hieroglyphics. The passage about the transport of the obelisk, which dates back to Ammianus, is on p. 6 III^r.

of those of antiquity. This singular image is deciphered as "Fatica et industria" [hard work and industry] alluding to the causes of the greatness of the classical architects. The motto is then expounded in Christian terms in the hieroglyphs on the base of the elephant.

This says the following: "first the horned skull of a bull with two agricultural implements tied to the horns; then an altar resting on two goats' feet, with a burning flame and on its face, an eye and a vulture. Next a washing basin and a ewer; then a ball of string transfixd by a spindle and an antique vase with its mouth stopped. Then there was a sole with an eye, crossed by two branches, one of laurel and the other of palm, neatly tied; an anchor and a goose; an antique lantern, with a hand holding it; an ancient rudder, bound up together with a fruited olive-branch; then two hooks, a dolphin, and lastly a closed coffer". Such well-carved graphic forms, in which Poliphilo sees the "most ancient and sacred writing", are to be read as follows: "Ex labore Deo naturae sacrificia liberaliter, paulatim reduces animum deo subjectum, firmam custodiam vitae tuae misericorditer gubernando tenebit incolumemque servabit" [From your labour to the god of nature sacrifice freely. Gradually you will make your soul subject to God. He will hold the firm guidance of your life, mercifully governing you, and will preserve you unharmed]. It is characteristic of Brother Francesco that, even though he concealed it amongst his hieroglyphs, he used the old motto "ora et labora" [prayer and work] as a rule of life for the Renaissance artist.

The way in which Colonna shaped and composed this set of hieroglyphs demonstrates again the process which we have already seen, that is he used symbols from Egyptian monuments, or at least those he mistakenly believed to be such. On the obelisks the image of the goose often appears. Naturally, Colonna is ignorant of the fact that it represents the letter "s", or else the determinative for "son", so he seems to interpret the well-known story of the salvation of the Campidoglio as "protection".³⁰ Thanks to information provided by Ammianus, Poliphilo understands that in ancient Egypt the vulture represented nature, and from Macrobius that the eye meant the god Osiris. It is pos-

³⁰ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 174, which is expressed as follows: "sunt qui per anserem pictum custodiam interpretantur, idque ex Romana potius historia desumptum quam ab Aegyptiis traditum. . ." Then, about Poliphilo: "illud vero juniorum commentum est, per anserem alligatum ad anchoram firmam custodiam intelligere".



Fig. 23 Part of an ancient temple frieze, no. 100 in the *Nuova descrizione del Museo Capitolino*, Rome 1888: original height .59m, length 2.12m

^{xxx} The ambone (or amboni) was originally the step between the nave and choir of an early church. In those days the priest would presumably stand on this step to deliver his sermon and in time the word came also to be used to mean a pulpit. But the six pieces of the frieze preserved in the Capitoline Museum would clearly fit on the step rather than on a pulpit as presently understood. The frieze most likely was originally part of the exterior of a Roman temple and, as Giehlow says, would depict the sacrificial implements used within the temple. A description of the purpose of these implements is contained in J. H. Middleton, *The Remains of Ancient Rome*, 1892 vol 1, p. 340. A similar fragment of a frieze still exists in situ on the remains of the Temple of Vespasian in the Forum in Rome. Another such frieze with almost identical objects is shown on the Arco degli Argentari in Velabro, Rome and is described and illustrated in Calvesi, cit., pp. 97, 143-145 and ill. 31. The most ancient of these “hieroglyphs” given by Colonna and his contemporaries was the ox-skull. In the earliest days the actual skulls of the animals which had been sacrificed were placed on the exterior of the temple and what are described as “agricultural instruments” or hoes hanging from the horns were in actuality the garlands which adorned these sacrificial animals.

^{xxxi} Colonna’s altar derives from the chest shown on the Capitoline frieze. Colonna has transformed what is described in the Capitoline catalogue as an incest chest (or *acerra*) into an altar and the oak branch behind the chest into a fire thus emphasizing and confirming his translation. Again it is im-

sible that even in the case of the “hook” he intended to reproduce signs similar to that he had seen on the obelisks.

In this series of hieroglyphs there can be seen the decisive influence of that ancient frieze, which I have repeatedly mentioned and which originally decorated a temple dedicated to Neptune in the Campo Verano and that from the time of Constantine onwards had adorned the “amboni”^{xxx} of the church of San Lorenzo fuori le Mura, built during that period; at the end of the fifteenth century, it was transferred to the Capitoline Museum. A comparison of the woodcut in the *Hypnerotomachia* (fig. 22) not only with the two fragments mentioned above (figs. 18 and 21) but also with the one reproduced here shows that both have objects in common: coffers with feet of animals, keys, jugs and cattle skulls. Since Mantegna and Heemskerk copied these sculptures, it is natural to think that Colonna, during his stay in Rome, had gone to see and draw this frieze, whose six pieces even today total the substantial length of thirteen meters, in order to copy the hieroglyphs.^{xxxi}

It also seems that Colonna was able to see some paintings in a house near the Orsini Palace at Monte Giordano, and that he was able to copy these more accurately than the frieze.³¹ Of

³¹ *Nuova descrizione del Museo Capitolino*, Rome 1888, pp. 268 ff., where it provides a precise description of the sacrificial instruments depicted on the fragments of the frieze, reproduced in N. Foggini, *Del Museo Capitolino* vol. IV, Rome 1782, pl. 34, and in P. Rigetti, *Descrizione del Campidoglio*, vol. I, Rome 1833, pl. CCCXXXVI, CCCXXXVII. We owe the biographical information to the kindness of Professors von Schneider of Vienna and Hülssen of Rome. About the church of San Lorenzo Fuori le mura see F. Albertini, *Opusculum de mirabilibus novae et veteris urbis Romae*, ed. A. Schmarsow, Heilbronn 1886, fol. 6 which states that the cardinal Oliverio Carafa had the church decorated probably in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century (Albertini uses the word “nuper”). This is repeated in A. Fulvio, *Antiquitates urbis*, Rome 1527, fol. VI, where it is added that the church had been built by Constantine and decorated with marble ornaments. In respect of the designs of Heemskerk (1533-1536) and the transfer of the frieze to the Capitoline Museum (1578 - 1590) see Michaelis, *Storia della collezione capitolina* cit., p. 46. As for Mantegna, see below.

course, this information goes back to the second decade of the sixteenth century. However, his source was no other than Geofrey Tory, that brilliant artist, engraver, printer and professor who, believing that these paintings were depictions of ancient hieroglyphs, did not fail to reproduce them. The description is given in his principal work, the *Champ Fleury*, where you find the following description of the text on the walls of this house, “an oxhead with two hoes hanging from the horns, then a frog and above that an eye, after that a small cauldron full of fire, the face of a man, a vessel pour water, violets in a pot, an eye on the sole of a shoe, the anchor of a ship, a crane holding a stone in one of its claws and a dolphin under a lamp which it is holding in one hand”.^{32,xxxii}

³² Geoffrey Tory de Bourges, *Champ Fleury* cit., fol. LXXIII “j’ay veu de ces escriptures. . . pareillement en une maison qui est pres le Palais du Mont Jordan, ou il y ya en peinture, comme j’en ay aporte le double” followed by the text above. Regarding the author’s stay in Rome, see A. Bernard, *Geofroy Tory*, Paris 1865, and the entry in *Nouvelle Biographie Gnérale*. Tory was in Rome twice, first in the early sixteenth century, and then in 1512 after he began to draw and to make silhouettes. Presumably he copied the paintings during this last visit. The second date is shown by the fact that Tory says in *Champ Fleury* cit., fol. 41, of having seen printed in Rome *Le livre des Epitaphes de l’ancienne Romme*; “que j’ai vue imprimer au temps, que j’estoye en la dicte Romme;” fol. 60: “naqueres imprimé en la dicte Romme ou pour lors j’estois habitant”. Bernard has rightly identified the book with “*Epigrammata antiquae urbis*” by J. Mazocchi. For the date of this edition, see *Inscriptiones urbis Romae latinae*, ed. E. Bormann and S-W. Henzen, vol I. Romae 1876, p. XLVI. In the colophon of the first edition of *Opusculum de mirabilibus novae et veteris urbis Romae*, printed in Rome February 3, 1510 by J. Mazocchi it is stated that “infra paucos dies in epythaphiorum opusculum in lucem ponet”. From this statement it stands to reason therefore that they had started to print the inscriptions, as he had requested Cornelius Cymbalus in his introduction. This passage is also found in the second edition of October 20, 1515, while it is missing in the reissue of Lyon in 1520, because in the meantime the epitaphs had been published. This follows from the printing “privilege” of Leo X, dated November 30, 1517. However, the work appeared only in 1521, with the title of “*Epigrammata antiqua urbis*”, since the index of the inscriptions which should have been placed at the beginning written by Valerius Probus resulted in the delay of the release of the text. Meanwhile, the corrections proposed by Accursius were attached as an appendix to the work. That Tory had not intended such corrections can be deduced from the expression “livre des epitaphes”. After all he had already printed the work in 1518 in Paris. The printing of the epitaphs, which Tory helped with, then falls between 1510 and 1517. Since in 1512 Tory was still teaching philosophy at the College de Bourgogne in Paris, where he oversaw the journey of Antonio Pio, he must have been in Rome between 1512 and 1517 and during those years must have copied the hieroglyphs. Albertini does not mention these paintings; about the fact that the building seen by Tory could have been that belonging to Orsini, see Albertini in Schmarsow cit. fol. 30: “domus Ursinorum in monte Jordano”.

possible to say whether he mistook the branch for what it was or took advantage of it for his own purposes. It is odd to see an altar on four feet and Pozzi and Ciapponi p. 69 draw attention to the difference between the illustration and Colonna’s translation. The first shows leonine feet but the description has goat-like feet.

xxxii “Une teste de Beuf, ayant pendu aux deux cornes deux houes, puis une grenouille et au dessous d’elle ung oueil, en apres une chauffette pleine de feu, ung visaige d’homme, ung vaisseau vuydant de l’eau, des violettes en ung pot, ung oueil sus une sole de soulier, une ancre de navire, une grue tenant une pierre de l’ung de ses pieds et ung daulphin sus une lampe qui est tenu d’une main”. The text seen by Tory has been interpreted by Charles Dempsey as meaning “The labor of man is contemptible in the eye of God. By his divine love for the man who little by little subjects his soul to God, He will take his life in custody and vigilantly preserve it in safety”. See C. Dempsey, ‘Renaissance Hieroglyphic Studies and Gentile Bellini’s Saint Mark Preaching in Alexandria’, *Hermeticism and the Renaissance: Intellectual History and the Occult in early modern Europe*, Washington, 1988, p. 353. The only significant difference between this and Colonna’s inscription is the addition of the frog which casts the labor of man in a negative light. George B. Ives in the English translation of the *Champ Fleury* (Grolier Club, 1927) mistranslates the phrase “a hoe hanging from a horn” as “a frog hanging from each horn”. The Orsini Palace on Monte Giordano had been sacked in the 1480’s by a mob instigated by a rival Roman family, the Colonna, but in any event Tory in the *Champ Fleury* only says the house where the frescos were was close to the palace. Giehlow makes a slip here since as he says above Tory can only have seen the paintings in Rome between between 1512

and 1517 and the *Champ Fleury*, an attempt to standardize and preserve the importance of the French language by codifying its grammar and accents thus giving it equal authority to Latin and Greek and by implication giving to the work of French authors the same prestige as the classics, was published in 1529 long after the *Hieroglyphica*.

Actually the woodcut of Colonna fits more with these symbols than with those of the frieze. It can therefore be assumed that some of these bizarre images such as the eye placed on a sole, a hand holding a lamp, the hoes with the cow skull, the tilted vessel pouring water, in short, all the inventions of Colonna himself, once formed part of the frescoes in this house. If Tory was right in reporting that these were ancient paintings, then you could easily infer that such paintings were the original for the *Hypnerotomachia*.

What is startling about this hypothesis, however, is the extraordinary similarity of the paintings with the woodcuts. Clumsy copying was not one of Colonna's characteristic methods as might have been the case if he had used Tory's originals; one must assume that where the woodcuts of the *Hypnerotomachia* differ from the sculptures on the frieze they are just flat imitations, such as in the case of the transformation of the open box to an altar, which certainly means the *chaufrette pleine de feu*, or in the addition of the hoes to the representation of the ox-skull. Investigating further the relationship between paintings, woodcuts and frieze, it can be noted that, apart from the images of the frog and the crane which probably derive from Horapollo,^{xxxiii} the first contain only symbols that are depicted in the woodblock prints of the *Hypnerotomachia*, while the latter have other objects borrowed from the frieze and developed separately. We have already noticed that among the hieroglyphs of Colonna even the vases and the anchor have their origin in those sculptures. Another hieroglyph, dealt with below, which is an open box with cypress branches, shows without doubt that we are dealing here with a description similar to that of one of the boxes decorated with oak leaves that appears in the frieze. The reworking of these sculptures directly manifests the autonomy of the author and excludes borrowings such as those mentioned in the case of the paintings. This gives rise to the suspicion that instead the murals were derived from the woodcuts of the *Hypnerotomachia*. Of course, the work of Poliphilo was published only in December of 1499, so it would be a surprise if Tory, who must have copied the murals after 1512, was wrong on the matter of their dating.^{xxxiv} But it is also true that the complete lack of critical sense of this era in the confrontation with mystical objects and their use in part by forgers makes the hypothesis very likely that Tory must have

^{xxxiii} The frog in Horapollo (I.25 and II.101,102) signifies the unfinished or deformed man. The standing crane (II.94) does signify Vigilance.

^{xxxiv} This discussion follows from the rather dubious inference by Giehlow that what Tory saw were hieroglyphs, therefore they were ancient and therefore they must have been earlier than the similar "hieroglyphs" of Colonna. Although he ultimately appears to reject the possibility that these hieroglyphs were derived from the paintings on the house, the text of Tory does not actually bear the interpretation that Giehlow makes in the first place. Tory mentions nothing about dating but just says that he saw paintings incorporating these symbols.

fallen victim to all this. To the humanist, the precursor and compatriot of Champollion, these were not examples of grotesque^{xxxv} nor even hieroglyphic depictions but modern enigmas originating with Colonna, genuine Egyptian images that he had faithfully copied.

^{xxxv} For grotesques, see ch. 3 nt. xlii.

With this, the hypothesis that the woodcuts of the *Hypnerotomachia* must derive directly from the frieze is not reformulated, but it in fact only emphasizes the extraordinary and immediate influence of these ancient reliefs on the hieroglyphs of Colonna, who must personally have copied them accurately, in view of the fact that even the fractured bone of the ox-skull is faithfully embodied in the woodcuts, while the decoration of the bowls and pitchers highlights the essential features of the original models.

How Colonna was accustomed to use sketches to elaborate the hieroglyphic puzzles is something that emerges from an analysis of their relationship with the images on the plinth and with the hieroglyphs that Poliphilo remarks on the parapet of the bridge.

It has been said previously that in the *Hypnerotomachia* the customary interpretation of the anchor surrounded by the dolphin as a symbol of the motto of Augustus which appears on the coin of Titus,^{xxxvi} but does not exist on the ancient frieze, takes on the echo of some ancient wisdom. In fact, an examination of the frieze shows that the dolphin despite being on the prow of the ship and the anchor that goes with it, are in locations sufficiently emphasized to explain why a humanist might think they had found, in the form of sacred sculptures of the Egyptian priests that is in hieroglyphs in the strict sense, the elements that make up the symbol on the coin of Titus. It is assumed, wrongly, that Colonna, reusing the anchor and the dolphin in the inscription on the base of the elephant, had repeated their meaning of “tarditas” [delay] and “velocitas” [speed]. But this is not correct; in this case, the dolphin is interpreted as “incolumnitas” [safety] and the anchor means “firma” [solidity]. This reading is a concession by the author to the opinion, correct or otherwise, of those who objected that in the original interpretation the meaning of the symbols on the coin contradicted the motto. Subsequently, the hypothesis has been successfully advanced that the anchor around which is wrapped a dolphin is intended to signify “princeps subditorum incolumitatem procurans” [The prince striving for the safety of

^{xxxvi} It should be made clear that the motto is not shown on the coin of Titus and it seems that the combination of motto and symbol (dolphin and anchor) does appear for the first time in the Renaissance in Colonna's interpretation of these hieroglyphs. However, Vico reports a coin of Augustus which does have both motto and symbol: Enea Vico, *Discorsi di M. Enea Vico parmigiano: sopra le medaglie de gli antichi, divisi in due libri*, Ferrara: 1555, p. 56.

xxxvii Giehlow is referring here to Alciato's *Emblemata* fol. B2^r in the 1531 edition and fol B5^r p. 25 in the Paris 1534 edition. See the Glasgow Alciato Emblem website: <http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/index.php> (10/17/2012).

xxxviii The mark is first used by Aldus in the second volume of his edition of *Poetae Christiani Veteres* published in 1502. If the principal inspiration for the mark was indeed the Poliphili it is rather odd that Aldus waited eighteen months to use it and then suddenly inserted it in a second volume. This alone suggests that he had another source which gave him the final inspiration between the preparation of the first and second volumes of this work.

xxxix Godwin translates "reduces" merely as "make your soul subject to God". More in accord with Colonna's purpose would be to "lead back your soul to God".

his subjects].^{33, xxxvii} Colonna, adducing such an interpretation for the hieroglyphs on the base, would give credence to that option, but that it should not be judged as an alternative to the traditional interpretation where the dolphin is bound to the anchor is demonstrated both by the use of the image among the hieroglyphs on the parapet of the bridge and from his reading founded on the imperial motto. The horizontal position taken in this representation of the dolphin, bound around the anchor, is probably explained by the analogous position in which the animal is represented on the frieze. In this way Colonna obscured the dependence of his invented hieroglyph on the coin of Titus, in order to convince even a scholar such as Erasmus that the motto of the Caesars had its origins in ancient Egypt. The distinguished humanist, Aldus Manutius confirmed as much when he decided to choose the sign of Augustus as a typographical mark because it had a tradition going back to Egyptian hieroglyphics. So the frieze that had influenced the sculptures of Colonna was one amongst the elements that gave birth to this famous mark.^{xxxviii}

Much the same sort of controversy arose over the meaning of the eye on a sole which was amongst the hieroglyphs of the base and the interpretation of it by Colonna as "deo subjectus" [subject to God]. For later, Fra Urbano contradicted this interpretation, understanding the image in the opposite sense as "divum contemptor" [contempt for the gods]. And this may also have resulted from his reading of the *Hypnerotomachia*.^{34, xxxix}

³³ See Green cit. with a copy of the 1532 edition of Augsburg, where the dolphin wraps only the left fluke of the anchor pulling it. In the edition edited by Ch. Wechel, Parisii 1538, this configuration is correct in the sense of the coin of Titus. In all the first Augsburg editions of Alciato from 1531 to 1534 the dolphin is shown horizontally around one fluke pulling the anchor. In the first authorized edition by Wechel of 1534 and subsequently the anchor and dolphin are vertical.

³⁴ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit, fol. 234: "Alicubi videmus in solea sculptum oculum, quod juniores pro animo deo subjecto . . . posuerunt, quod ego aliorum iudicio reliquerim. Scimus nos solem simpliciter calcandi suppressendique indicium esse", where the author relies on Virgil to maintain his own interpretation. That "calcare" and "suppeditare" can be translated as "solea" [sole], is recognized by Colonna in the succeeding hieroglyph; see below for the description of the hieroglyphs on the sarcophagus. Moreover, Valeriano sometimes seems to interpret Colonna incorrectly, such as when he reports that "paulatin" in the explanation of the hieroglyphs stands for "a ball of string transfix by a spindle" instead of the stopped up vase, see. fol. 356 (while Colonna shows the ball of thread with the word "reduces", alluding to the myth of the labyrinth). Citing classical and biblical passages Valeriano deals exhaustively with the meaning of "a stopped-up vase" [vas obturatum] as "mind" [animum], fol. 406^v.

The pleasure of giving a new meaning even to those hieroglyphs that had been handed down from classical authors is clearly shown in the case of the first sign from these inscriptions, the “capitale osso cornato de bove” [horned ox-skull]. Macrobius had expressly designated this as a hieroglyph which stood for “terra” [land], while Alberti had understood it as the Egyptian symbol of “peace” [pax]. Colonna uses both interpretations: the symbol of “pax” extended to mean “patientia” [patience] while turning the hieroglyph of the earth into a symbol of work. The fact that Colonna is constrained to using “the ox-skull” as a symbol obviously originates with the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollon, according to which the Egyptians used a bull’s horn to indicate *ἔργον* [work] and that of a cow, *πόνος* [work] or with a different letter *ποινή*.^{35,xl} He may have been influenced in this respect by the paired horns that are frequently found on Egyptian monuments, at least until they became formalized as the cattle skulls depicted on the frieze of the ambone.³⁶

^{xl} *Ποινή* means vengeance or punishment which is how it is interpreted in Horapollon II.18. Giehlow probably intended to write *ποίημα*, a piece of work.

In short, the most precise consideration preceded the choice and the formal creation of these new symbols. This is also shown by the attributes of the “ox-skull”: just as the concept of *patience* is derived from symbols of plants, so the hoes clarify the different meanings of the symbol of work. It should be emphasized that Colonna uses sacrificial ribbons to properly indicate the close relationship between the principal symbol “naked ox-skull” and other interpretative figures to form a single word just as he also makes use of similar ribbons in other cases, that is when he wishes to relate groups of words or phrases. Thus, for example he uses a goose linked to an anchor to indicate the sense of “*firma custodia*” [a strong guardian] and the translation of “*que*” [and] with a strap between the ark and the dolphin.

³⁵ See Horapollon II.17: *βοὸς ἄρρενος κέρας γραφόμενον, ἔργον σημαίνει*. Ibid II.18: *βοὸς ἄρρενος κέρας γραφόμενον ποινήν σημαίνει*. In the second case there is also found the reading *ποεῖν*, that is the verb form of *πόνος*.

³⁶ See above, pp. 117 ff., and Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 27: “De opere demum et labore hieroglyphica passim vulgata sunt, descripta quidem cornua caputve bovis maris opus; foeminae vero laborem anxietatemque significare, quamvis in impressis Hori codicibus *βοὸς* dictio utroque lemmate desideratur; scribendum enim est ex vetustis codicibus in manuscriptis *βοὸς ἄρρενος κέρας* et inferius *βοὸς δὲ θηλείας κέρας*. Distinguuntur vero a cornuum speciemas et foemina, quippe quod marium et majora et tortuosiora sunt, foeminarum vero et minora et uno flexu conspicus, cuiusmodi fere sunt novae lunae cornua; sed in hoc significato nonnulli sarcula, ligones et, si deo placeat, rastra etiam ad cornua religarunt. Sunt, qui nulla maris foeminaeque differentia bovillum caput exertum pelle purgatumque carne pro labore et tolerantia proponant”.

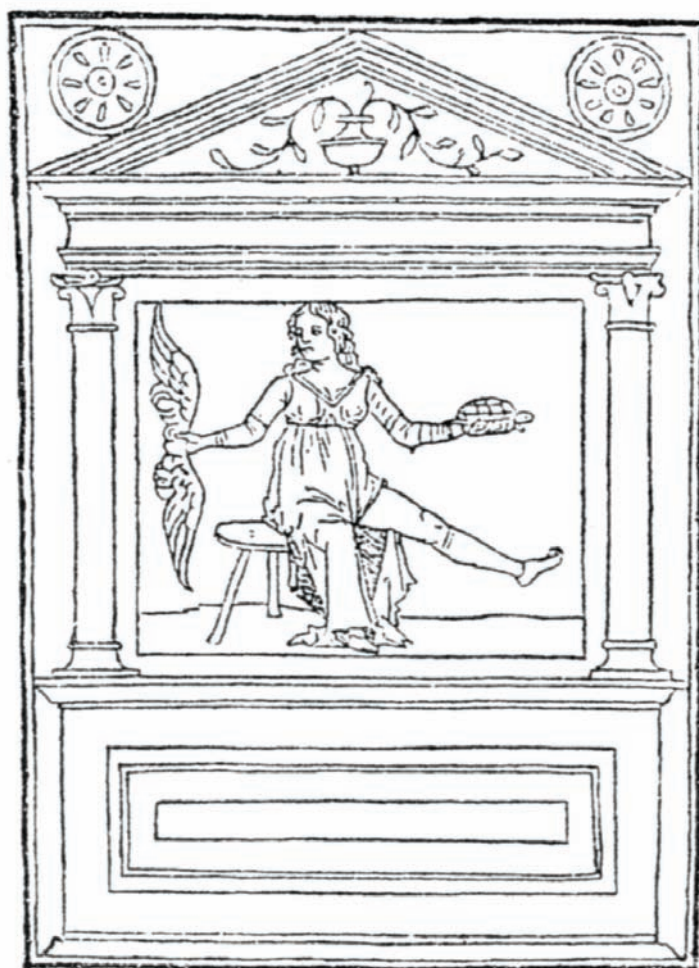


Fig. 24 Hieroglyph from Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* – Aldus 1499 – Control speed by sitting

^{xli} The modern literature on Alberti is now very large. For the *De Re Aedificatoria* see Leon Battista Alberti: *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. by J. Rykwert, N. Leach and R. Tavernor, MIT Press, 1991 which is based on the critical edition by G. Orlandi from 1966. For other aspects of his life see Leon Battista Alberti. *On Painting. A New Translation and Critical Edition*, ed. and trans. by Rocco Sinisgalli, Cambridge University Press, 2011 as well as general studies such as A. Grafton, *Leon Battista Alberti Master Builder of the Renaissance*, New York: Hill & Wang, 2000 and R. Tavernor, *On Alberti and the Art of Building*, Yale University Press, 1998.

The inscription at the bottom of the unique base of the obelisk, which explains the words *πόνος καὶ εὐφύια* [toil and knowledge] engraved on the decoration that covers the head of the elephant and pays tribute to the zeal and energy of Renaissance art, was then the fruit not only of the most subtle research, but also the methodical use of a vast erudition.

☛ Colonna's *Hieroglyphs* and the *De re aedificatoria* of Alberti.^{xli}

It is not necessary to suppose that his work was completely revised to assume that over the years Colonna changed or altered his hieroglyphic inscriptions several times, inscriptions which presumably were originally composed in Rome during the pe-

riod when the obelisk projects were being undertaken. This hypothesis is supported not only by the growing interest during those years in hieroglyphic puzzles, but also by the enrichment of the *Hypnerotomachia* with a further series of hieroglyphs, whose late origin is proved by a comparison of the content of the work with the ancient authors used by Colonna.

It is obvious that at this second stage of the unfolding of his dream of love, Poliphilo goes back to the "hieroglyphs sculptured in relief" that he sees on a bridge in front of three entrances. On the right, he distinguishes between "a lady wreathed with a serpent, sitting on one buttock and lifting the opposite leg. On the side on which she is sitting, she holds a pair of wings in her hand, and in the other a tortoise" (see fig. 24) while to the left on the parapet, is "a circle with two little spirits with their breasts facing to the outside". From the first image we get the phrase "Velocitatem sedendo, tarditatem tempera surgendo" [Control speed by sitting, and slowness by rising] and from the other the motto "medium tenere beati" [blessed are those that hold to the mean].^{37,xlii}

With this Colonna only provides a variant of the idea that he had previously delighted in from the symbols drawn from the coin of Titus, thus rendering new tribute to the virtue of temperance. Eager to impress on his readers this archaic principle he forgets it himself and repeats the point once again by placing new examples on the bridge. Since such an error is unusual for him, it must be explained as a later addition.^{xliii} For the rest, these hieroglyphs once again show the intent of the author to pursue his theme according to material that classical authors had provided on Egypt. Maybe Colonna knew, thanks to the medal of Alberti, that a pair of wings symbolized speed. Certainly he knew the hieroglyph of the hawk which derived from Diodorus: "Cito res facta" [things done quickly].^{xliv} In a distich by Ammianus there is the description of the tortoise as the laziest of animals.³⁸

If these hieroglyphs reveal a further revision to his text, then perhaps the device mentioned above, namely having Logistica decipher the secret of the branches of fir and larch at a later time, is not in fact a subtle later insertion in the first draft of the work. What's more, it is likely that this interpretation was taken from Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*.

Consulting this latter work is particularly important for proving that during the second phase of the drafting of the

xlii There is however no serpent depicted in the first image. The second reference is to the middle door through which Poliphilo is about to pass.

xliii There are in fact many examples of the combination of haste and restraint within the *Hypnerotomachia*. These reflect the interest of Colonna and other humanists in the concept of the coincidence of opposites and of balance and the medium as a philosophical aim. For a discussion, see Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance*, Norton, 1966 ch. VI, p. 97.

xliv Diodorus, *Library of History*, Book III, Chapter 4. Diodorus is actually describing Ethiopian hieroglyphics reported by the Egyptians. "Cito res facta" presumably refers to the hieroglyph as a thing created to represent speed. "Res facta" is now primarily used as a musical term but as a concept it originated with Aristotle; see the exposition in R. Hannas, 'Humanistic Light on "What Is res facta?"', *Revue belge de Musicologie*, 22, 1/4 (1968), pp. 51-63.

³⁷ See *Hypnerotomachia* cit., fol. hVII.

³⁸ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica*., cit. fol. 201, where there are more citations.

Hypnerotomachia, which took place after the Kalends of May 1467, final shape was also given to another series of hieroglyphs in which Colonna highlights their meaning not through individual signs, but by providing a picture of them. This series of hieroglyphs is discovered by Poliphilo on the face of a sarcophagus, and is interpreted as a funerary inscription: “Diis manibus. Mors vitae contraria et velocissima cuncta calcat, supeditat, rapit, consumit, dissolvit, melliflue duos mutuo se strictim et ardentem amantes hic extinctos conjunxit” [To the blessed shades. Death spurns all life’s contrary and rapid things. It gives, it takes, it consumes, it dissolves. Here it has sweetly united two dead ones who loved mutually, strictly and ardently].³⁹ The tomb, the commemorative stone of which had entirely enclosed the corpse was positioned in front of a second tomb where the deceased was completely petrified. Both coffins are part of a vast burial area, whose function is made clear by two hieroglyphs, a small owl and a lamp, placed at the entrance which signified “Vitae Letifer nuntius”. [Death bearing Messenger of Life.]^{40,xlv}

xlv A modern edition of Aelian’s *De Natura Animalium* referred to in nt. 40 is Leipzig: Teubner, 1864 ed. R. Hercher, also online at the Perseus Project at www.perseus.tufts.edu.

In no other passage of the *Hypnerotomachia* was the ongoing effort of the author to supplement his work so clearly demonstrated as in the description of these tombs and their inscriptions. So much so that for about thirty pages the author continues to invent ever new epigrams. The disproportionate length of this chapter to the rest of the work, which consists of 234 folios, demonstrates therefore continuous increments to this part of the text. It was perhaps the collection of Roman inscriptions preserved in the monastery of Treviso which aroused the curiosity of Colonna for this study. This interest must then have been enhanced by his humanist education until the influence of Alberti also led him in this particular direction.

³⁹ *Hypnerotomachia* cit., fol. qVII. Valeriano treats comprehensively every individual hieroglyph; on “Di Manes”, see fol. 227: “invenias plerumque in veterum monumentis capita duo duabis additis inferne literis DM, quod Dis Manibus sacrum intelligas. Caeterum . . . Aegyptii id ipsum innuere volentes et tutelam significantes nullas addebant literas”; with respect to the spindle as an attribute of Lachesis and symbol for “death”, see fol. 356; on the saying “sagittae duae parallelari positu jacentes” as a sign of “opposites”, see fol. 310; for “duae faces vinculo constrictae divaricataeque - pinguntur vero hae accensa parte rursum versus erecta” – as for “amor mutuus”, see fol. 342^v; as for the branches of cypress and pine trees as a symbol of death, see fols. 380 and 381, on “jugum” as a sign of marriage, see fol. 358^v.

⁴⁰ See Horapollo, II.25 “the night owl is a symbol of death” but also Aelian, *De Natura Animalium*, X, 37, and the tradition of the medieval bestiary and the Physiologus.

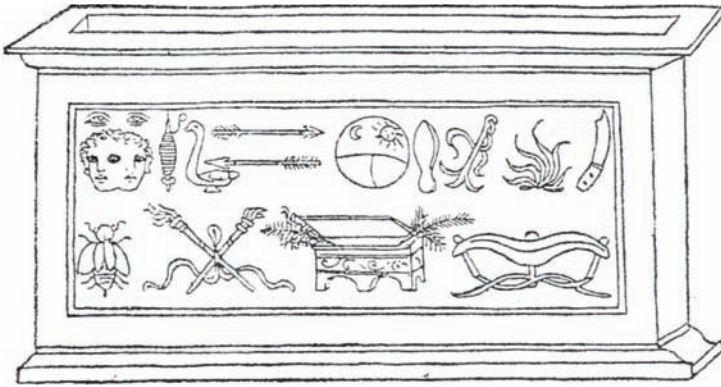


Fig. 25 Hieroglyph from Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* – Aldus 1499 – To the blessed shades

If we compare this part of the *Hypnerotomachia* with the chapter of the *De sepulchris, titulis, notis et sculpturis* by Alberti already cited, the similarity is immediately noticeable. Colonna follows the suggestion of Alberti of expressing a certain humor in the epitaphs, “*lepiditatis miraculum*” [a miracle of wit], of constructing word games like “*amens amans*” [madly loving] or by engaging in amorous laments. In addition, the use of hieroglyphs for the sarcophagus, funerary inscriptions which were universally understandable, corresponds to the beliefs of the author of the *De re aedificatoria*.

In the creation of individual images Colonna distances himself from Alberti, who defines the bee as a royal symbol, while on the sarcophagus Colonna gives the sense of “mellifluous”. But clearly the hieroglyph of the eye to indicate “Deus” reveals the influence of Alberti on our author, who constructs the plural “*Diis*” by doubling the image. In addition, faithful to his method so far observed, the author mixes his hieroglyphs with Roman symbols. The principle for his choice of these signs is provided by the obelisks with their depictions of eyes, heads, insects, bees and containers, while the form of the hieroglyphs derives from the frieze of the *ambone* of San Lorenzo fuori le mura with its half-open casket, decorated with branches, funerary monuments and genies holding torches as well as coins with depictions of insects.

This might give rise to the hypothesis that these ideas of Colonna were intended to emphasize the extraordinary preservation of bodies in sarcophagi thus combining both their Egyptian and Roman origins. Perhaps he was prompted to do so by reports about boxes of Egyptian mummies, or the discovery of

a sarcophagus containing the body of a young Roman, apparently in the best state of preservation.⁴¹ But even in this respect it should be recognized that what must have been especially decisive was the *De re aedificatoria*, which Colonna follows almost word for word when he notes the characteristics of the stone from the Asian Troad, or those of another type of stone called *chemites* as the cause of preservation of the remains in the *sarkophagos*.^{42,xlvi}

xlvi Giehlow's argument is that since the early printed editions (certainly the 1485 edition which is queried in nt. 42 below) have the word *comites* and not *chernites* Colonna must have been reading from a manuscript which incorporated the correct spelling taken from Pliny. However the manuscript of the *De re Aedificatoria* preserved in the Laurentiana (Plut.89.Sup.113) also uses the word "*comites*" which calls Giehlow's argument into question.

The question therefore arises: when did Colonna have the opportunity to consider this language of Alberti to the point of following this passage almost word for word? If the similarities were rare, one could assume that he had had the opportunity to acquire this knowledge during his stay in Rome, when perhaps he had met Alberti. But it would be wrong to place the description of the sarcophagus during the time of the revision of the *Dream of Love*. Since these borrowings are more frequent and fuller than anything that Colonna could ever have developed himself, it is very likely that after the death of Alberti he drew extensively on the *De re aedificatoria* on his own. Indeed, one can assume that the entire reworking of the *Hypnerotomachia* is due to the study of the treatise of Alberti, and that even the description of the sarcophagus and its hieroglyphs were incorporated into the book on this occasion. A comparison of the works of the two authors, along with a look at their lives, should therefore be enlightening.

⁴¹ On this discovery on April 19, 1485, see Burckhardt cit., vol. I, pp. 198 and 349. The sarcophagus was found in the necropolis near the Appian Way, a place that Colonna had certainly visited.

⁴² *De re aedificatoria*, ed. Tory cit., fol. XXVI "Sarcophagum quoque lapidem apud Troadem Asiae defodi ferunt qui fixili vena jungatur. In hunc lapidem defunctorum corpora ante diem quadragesimum tota praeter dentes assumi asserunt et, quod magis mireris, vestem calciamentaue et ejusmodi una cum corporibus illata verti in lapides praedicant. Contrarius huic est *comites* (?whether this also was printed in 1485) lapis, quo Darium condidisse referent. Is enim corpora praeservat integerrima". Here Alberti repeats Pliny cit. XXXVI, 132, who describes this last stone as "*Chernites*". In the *Hypnerotomachia* cit., fol. qVI^v, we read: "Nearby I found a very ancient sepulchre without any inscription, inside which I could see through a crack only the petrified funeral garments and shoes. I guessed that this effect was due to the sarcophageous stone from the Troad in Asia, and wondered if it were the body of Darius. Close by, I saw among the woodland shrubs a noble tomb of porphyry exquisitely sculpted in which . . . looking into. . . I saw two corpses entirely preserved from which I guessed immediately it must have been made of *chernites* stone" The composition of the two types of stone leaves no doubt that this must have been borrowed from Alberti and not from Pliny. The word "*chemites*" shows, however, that the *De re Aedificatoria* had not yet been printed.

The discussion of architecture by Colonna, his elaboration of the precepts of Vitruvius and his resulting contempt for the medieval architectural style has long attracted the attention of many scholars when comparing similar trends that can be found in the treatise of Alberti.^{xlvii} Opinions differ only in respect of the degree of dependence of the two authors on the interpretation and use of the work of Vitruvius. Ilg who assumes a second version of the *Hypnerotomachia*, first in Latin then the vernacular, says the priority of Colonna was as an interpreter of Vitruvius, giving to Alberti the simple role of *auctoritas*. Popelin does not rule out the possibility that the treatise of Alberti, in the manuscript or the printed version, had greatly influenced the work of Colonna during the three or more decades that preceded its publication, which supposedly had been completed in 1467. Popelin confirms that sometimes the two authors express themselves in the same way, but doubts that this date is actually that of the first version of the *Hypnerotomachia*; Burckhardt dates its composition to 1485, that is after the appearance of Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*.^{43, xlviii}

Such, then, is the overall dependence on this surpassing genius that even this date attributed by Burckhardt seems more likely than the lack of recognition by Ilg of the relationship between the two works. Apart from any common inspiration, Colonna follows Alberti in particular in his choice of quotations. And it is these passages through a comparison with the Egyptian references that should emphasize most of all that the wonderful things described in the Dream are nearly all taken from *De re aedificatoria*. However, Alberti is not just plagiarized because his statements about the sources can be verified as is demonstrated by several separate expressions. Out of a great many examples of this kind we can report a typical case which shows clearly both the autonomy and the dependence of Colonna.

In the chapter on the construction of walls and ceilings, Alberti mentions that a huge stone on the island of Chemmi in the Nile served as the roof of a sanctuary and he suggests that this material could have been luminous and transparent, "ut etiam

xlvii See particularly Liane Le-faivre, *Leon Battista Alberti's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1997 which argues that the dependence of Colonna on Alberti is so great that the Poliphili must actually have been written by Alberti.

xlviii *De Re Aedificatoria* was first printed in 1485 and Alberti had died in 1472.

⁴³ Ilg cit., p. 23; Popelin cit., vol. I, p. CXXXII. His example from Alberti, is as follows: "ergo rimari omnia, considerare, metiri, lineamentis picturae colligere nusquam intermittebam". Colonna writes: "Poliphile te in questa commanda, perché avido sei di tanta disquisitione, imperoché omni cosa rimari, considerare et metiril laudabile se presta"; J. Burckhardt, *Geschichte der Renaissance in Italien*, Stuttgart 1891, p. 34 where the question is posed whether Poliphilo might have been conceived in Greece. Against this view see what has been written above pp. 108 ff.

nullis adaperitis foribus intus esse lux inclusa esse videatur" [that even revealed no openings though it seemed full of light]. Colonna takes up this idea which in a sense anticipates the modern glass dome and sets Poliphilo in front of a temple like that of Chemmi covered by a stone that "although there were no windows and all was closed with golden doors, it was brightly illuminated". In such a way, at least in his imagination, he constructed those dream castles and temples that the daring genius of Alberti had been able to propose as architectural projects.⁴⁴

This extensive use of the *De re aedificatoria*, which I have been able to verify only after a prolonged study of the text, confirms that the Colonna must have started the revision of his project after the death of Alberti. The latter did not publish his work himself^{xlix} and perhaps he worked on it during his final years without it being absolutely complete so it therefore seems unlikely that Colonna could have a sound knowledge of the treatise while Alberti was still alive. Although overall the content was known to a circle of intimates,⁴⁵ there is nothing to suggest, and thus it is rather unlikely, that before his death in 1472 Alberti had made any copies.

But this is not to say that Alberti did not play an important role in the first draft of *Hypnerotomachia*. On the contrary, if we consider that Colonna stayed in Rome when his fellow countryman, the bishop Teodoro de' Lelli, was still alive, if we think that his interest in ancient architecture had put him in contact with local architects and if one considers, finally, that Ridolfo Fioravante degli Alberti, the architect chosen to complete the transfer of the obelisks, belonged to the Bolognese branch of the family of Alberti,⁴⁶ then it is very likely that Colonna knew Leon Battista Alberti, doyen of architects, and that during the time he was in Rome, he had heard of Alberti's work on architecture and decided then to confer a fictionalized form on his ideas.

⁴⁴ Alberti in bk. VI, ch. V; *Hypnerotomachia* cit., fol. oII. Another borrowing is the extract where we see the construction of the Egyptian monuments, see Alberti bk. VII, ch. XVI and the *Hyperotomachia* cit., fol. dIv. The choice of the constructions by Simander and Semiramides leaves no room for doubt as to the dependence of Colonna, even if the latter seems to have verified the details which Alberti uses from Diodorus. Colonna takes directly from Diodorus the expression *συμμετρία*. The construction of the Egyptian statues is treated by Diodorus in book 1.98 (Teubner 1888).

⁴⁵ In regard to what is known about Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* while he was still alive, see the thorough discussion of Hoffmann cit., pp. 10 ff. and 16 ff., and also see above, pp. 62 ff.

⁴⁶ See L. von Pastor, cit., p. 431 with a list of recent literature.

Moreover, such a decision fully corresponds to the poetic aspirations of Alberti. The versatile Florentine in fact had very much at heart the aim of publicising the ideas of Vitruvius. In his treatise he translated the terminology of Greek art with particular emphasis on the “uneducated”, and thus had begun to turn his own work into the vernacular.⁴⁷ Neither would it be too risky to assume that an author who was quite happy to enter into discussions with young people, for example with Rucellai, and who appreciated the imaginative richness of Colonna, had given this latter the idea for his work. Furthermore, the first draft of the *Hypnerotomachia* was not in Latin, as Ilg supposes, but in the vernacular, and the translation which Colonna refers to is his own strange mixed style.^{xlix} Moreover, an analysis of individual phrases shows that Italian represents the basic structure of the work and that on top of that there are grafted Latin and Greek passages, a fact that Benoit de Court had already argued by the end of 1532⁴⁸ and this was later confirmed by Agostino who wrote, “apparet enim somnia sua . . . italice scribere ingressum, sed . . . Graece admiscet et Latine”. [for it seems that his dreams were initially written in Italian which he mixed with Greek and Latin]. In the 1460s the opinions of Poggio and Biondo according to which only Latin was worthy of being committed to writing were widespread. Alberti, however, had complained that “our modern Tuscan has much to hate in her, so that whatever excellent matter is written it displeases us”.^{49,1} This passage of Alberti devoid of prejudice, typical of a man ahead of his time, actually makes us suppose that Colonna drafted the first version of his work in the vernacular. But although for the designs of the obelisks, Colonna could have benefited from discussions with Alberti, and in spite of the fact that the principles and methods regarding the elaboration of the hieroglyphs were probably based on

^{xlix}The idiosyncratic nature of the language needs to be emphasized. It is far beyond macaronic (a mixture of languages); Casella and Pozzi describe it as “an obstinate chase after the most precious word taken from the most remote regions of Latin literature” and they claim to have identified 3,000 neologisms many with Greek roots. Even the grammar and syntax is mixed. Colonna uses a Latin word order with the verb at the end but does not use case endings so subject and object are difficult to identify. For a discussion of the general impenetrability of the text see Lefavre cit., ch. 3.

¹“Che sia la nostra oggi Toscana tanto averla in odio, che in essa qualcunqua benché ottima cosa scritta ci dispaccia”.

⁴⁷ *De re aedificatoria*, ed. Tory cit., XCIV “Polliciti summus velle me, quoad in me sit, latine et omnino ita loqui, ut intelligar. Fingere idcirco oportet vocabula, ubi usitata non suppeditant, et sumere a rebus non dissimilibus nominum similitudinem conducit”. In respect of the translation into the vernacular, see Janitschek cit., p. VI nt.

⁴⁸ See his commentary on Martial d’Auvergne, *Arresta amorum*, Lyon 1533, fol. 276: “Fuerunt etiam ex his, qui prosa volgari id fecerunt, inter quos vero doctior frater Franciscus Colona, cognomento Polyphilus, qui Poliam suam illam omnium disciplinarum doctissimam ac omnium artium officinam instructissimam exornat”. – As for the Agostino, see ch. 4 nt. 2 above.

⁴⁹ Bonucci, *Opere Volgari di L. B. Alberti*, Florence 1844, p. 211, Introduction to bk. III on the family. See the view of Ilg cit., p. 89.

oral information, it cannot be assumed that Alberti had given him the manuscript of *De re aedificatoria* so that he, Colonna, could get quotations from it.

The first notes of Colonna were prepared quickly, yet lack a theme, as can be inferred from his remark about the fact that at the time of the translation of the work he was still “sterile and jejune”. So it can only have been the subsequent study of the works of Alberti that imposed further reflection on these theoretical discussions. The systematic study of the Latin text of this work would have easily led Colonna to wonder whether the use of cultivated language was not actually the most appropriate. From this eventually was derived that peculiar compromise language of the *Hypnerotomachia* which was intended not only to meet the expectations of both the uneducated and the cultivated, but also multiplied the classical references just for the use of “scholars”. In this way the collection of inscriptions was enriched and more space was devoted to those series of riddling hieroglyphs, for which Colonna made use of the work of Alberti described above particularly in his interest in the passages on the sarcophagi.

When did this complete revision take place? Perhaps only after the publication of *De re aedificatoria* in December 1485. Alternatively, possibly Colonna was able to use earlier copies made after the death of Alberti. As I suggested above, by 1483 there was at Padua a copy of the manuscript made for Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, the patron to whom Leonardo Crasso of Verona later dedicated the *Hypnerotomachia*. At that time Colonna was in Venice in the convent of SS Giovanni e Paolo, where he is mentioned for the first time in the *liber consiliorum* on 11 November 1481. From the title of “magister” attached to his name, it is clear that after being inducted on May 31, 1473 as *baccalaureus* in the Collegium Theologorum of the University of Padua he had then continued his studies to obtain the title of Paduan *magister* that was required of him as a Venetian citizen. In view of the fact that the heirs of Alberti had consented to make copies of the manuscript of Alberti before its publication in print there is no reason to suppose that it could not have reached Padua before 1481 so that it is likely that it could already have been consulted by Colonna in his Paduan period. There are various other indications that together suggest that he revised his work at that time between 1473 and 1481.

The description of a banquet in the *Hypnerotomachia*, which is similar to a reception given in Rome in 1473 by the

princess Eleonora of Aragon described by Corio,^{li} led Ilg to infer that Colonna had personally witnessed this magnificent and luxurious Roman event, the coordinator of which was Pierio Riario, nephew of Sixtus IV and bishop of Treviso. But even if we could overlook the fact that there was not enough time to allow Colonna (who had passed the baccalaureus examination on May 31) to go to Rome to attend these celebrations held in the first week of June, it is not necessary to go to these lengths to explain the obvious parallel between the two works.⁵⁰ In fact, in the Padua University Library there has been recently found a contemporary account included in the *History of Milan* which Corio had used as a model for his description. In addition, by the fall of 1473, Pierio Riario had already left Padua accompanied by a party of guests full of enthusiasm for the splendor of the feast. In Padua, there lacked neither written nor oral reports from which Colonna could have had the idea of weaving this contemporary event into his novel. Moreover, the revision to *Hypnerotomachia* seems to have been taken up immediately after his examination and one of his compatriots, Ermolao Barbaro the Younger, was in Padua at the same time doing his translation of the *Plants* of Dioscorides. It is therefore not unlikely that on that occasion Colonna had made his studies of botany which he liked to boast about.^{51,lii} Moreover reports have come down to us regarding a cycle of frescoes executed in the Benedictine convent of Santa Giustina in Padua and from this source it can be assumed that Colonna might be said to have completed the continuous study of hi-

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 40. In respect of the banquet of the queen Eleuterilida see *Hypnerotomachia* cit., fol. FVII ff. The description of B. Corio (1459-1519) is in *Historia di Milano*, 1646 Padua, p. 824; the manuscript of Padua which is the basis of this description was discovered by Pastor cit., p. 460 where there are bibliographic references to the party and travels of Riario.

⁵¹ Apparently, Ilg, cit., p. 84, believed that Colonna had used an herbal of Ermolao Barbaro the Elder. Unfortunately I have not been able to tell if he wrote such a book and in any case there is confusion between the two Barbaros. Moreover, in 1453, the first period in which Colonna must have been in Treviso he exchanged the see of Treviso for Verona. Ermolao the Younger was born in 1454, graduated as doctor of law at Padua in 1477 and taught here until 1479. Later he went to Venice, returning only to Padua in 1484, and then engaged in politics from 1486 when he was received in Frankfurt and Bruges by Emperor Frederick III and by Maximilian. Then he lived in Rome until his death in 1493. He translated the *De medicinali materia* of Dioscorides Pedanio (Dioscorides Anazarbo) and Plutarch's essay, *De Iside et Osiride*. See the entry by von Mohnike in Ersch and Gruber's *Realencyclopädie*, Sect. I, vol. 7, pp. 350-352.

^{li} The banquet was on the occasion of the wedding of Eleanor to Ercole d'Este, duke of Ferrara. Corio could not have been there in person since he was only 12 or 13 years old at the time. His description is contained in his *History of Milan* written forty years later as indicated by Giehlow in note 50 and based on the description of Giacomo Sagromoro who was present at the banquet as the ambassador of the duke of Milan to the papal court. The latter describes the event as "downright insane prodigality". For a full description read *Elysium: a prelude to Renaissance theater* which includes an account by Eleanor herself and the extract from Corio at <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Elysium%3A+a+prelude+to+Renaissance+theater.-a018321371> (no author is given) (10/17/2012).

^{lii} The two Ermolao Barbaros were only distantly related. The elder who indeed was appointed Bishop of Verona in 1453 did not as far as is known write another herbal but he did make a translation of the *Fables of Aesop*. He died in 1471.

^{liii} Giehlow treats the frescos of Santa Giustina in Padua at length in view of their importance in the dating of the hieroglyphs of the *Hypnerotomachia*. He believes as does Volkmann cit., p. 23 that the *Hypnerotomachia* or at least discussions between Colonna and Abbot Gasparo were the source of the frescos. Dorez (see nt. 53 below) took the opposite view. The matter is difficult to determine; as can be seen from the earlier discussion of the influence of Alberti on Colonna and the date when the latter might have seen the *De Re Aedificatoria*, since the revisions of the *Hypnerotomachia* were on-going and must have occurred right up to the date of publication. Volkmann cit., pp. 24-25 has full page reproductions of some of the Mengardi prints of the Padua frescos. For further discussion see M. P. Billanovich, 'Una Miniera di Epigrafi e di Antich-

ita Il Chiostro Maggiore di S. Giustina a Padua; *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, 12 (1969) pp. 197-292 particularly pp. 260-276. Bilanovich compares the objects which make up the frieze of San Lorenzo, the hieroglyphs of Colonna and the frescos of S. Giustina and concludes that Colonna and Parentino independently copied the objects of the frieze from drawings of the latter. She also lists the numerous artists who did in fact make such drawings (p. 275).

^{liv} See Cristina Bragaglia, 'Girolamo del Santo e gli affreschi del chiostro maggiore di Santa Giustina a Padova: fonti iconografiche', *Bollettino del Museo civico di Padova*, 82, (1993) p. 174 and Alberta de Nicolò Salmazo, *Bernardino da Parenzo: un pittore "antiquario" di fine Quattrocento*, Padua: Antenore, 1989. Bragaglia points out that the *Elucidario* of da Potenza described by Giehlow as lost in nt. 53 is in the Biblioteca del Museo Civico, Padua as ms. BP 4898.

^{lv} The illustrator of the cuts in the *Hypnerotomachia* referred to by Giehlow in the nt. 52 has still not been identified. Many famous names have been suggested and it is likely that it was someone close to Aldus since five of the pictures in one of the works in the *Scriptores astronomici veteres* published by Aldus immediately prior to the *Hypnerotomachia* in October 1499, that is Germanicus' Commentary on the *Phaenomena* of Aratus, were by the same artist as the *Hypnerotomachia*. However the end result in the *Astronomici* is not as successful and the cuts are rather crude. This illustrates the fact that there were probably five stages in the production and printing of the pictures of the *Hypnerotomachia*. First the author himself most likely did sketches of each picture, secondly a recognized artist did faircopy drawings, thirdly a miniaturist copied the drawings on to the blocks, fourthly a cutter, the tagliadoro, cut the blocks, a long and laborious process, and then they were printed.

eroglyphs that he had cultivated for the *Hypnerotomachia*.^{52,lv}

These frescoes, now almost all destroyed, were begun under Abbot Gasparo, but due to the death of the painter Bernardo Parentino, remained unfinished. Only forty years later, around 1540, Abbot Ignatius had instructed Girolamo di Santo to continue the work that was completed in six years. According to the descriptions and illustrations still preserved, some of the paintings on the pillars and friezes^{53,lv} coincided perfectly with

⁵² In this regard, see L. Dorez, *Études Aldines. II. Des origines et de la circulation du "Songe de Poliphile in Revue des Bibliothèques*, VI (1896), pp. 239 ff., where there is admirably reproduced the greater part of the older bibliography. However, he does not note the dependence of the woodcuts of the *Hypnerotomachia* on the ancient frieze described above, a fact that explains the divergent views on this point.

⁵³ These were the reliefs in the tondo round the obelisk of Caesar with the exception of the hieroglyph of the trophies, of the hieroglyph "Velocitatem sedendo" and "Medium tenueri beati" and the anchor around which the dolphin was entwined as well as the two flails with the circle, see Dorez pp. 243 and 265. The copper engravings of Mengardi, cited in these passages, were published under the title of the *Delle pitture del chiostro maggiore del monastero di S. Giustina di Padova e di quattro stampe dell' medesima* [On the painting of the main cloister of the monastery of St. Justina of Padua and four prints of the same] by F. Mengardi. Dorez himself saw some of these in the Library of the Ecole des beaux-arts; the rest of his descriptions are based on a letter dated November 18, 1791 from P. Guglielmo della Valle reproduced on p. 263. Della Valle follows the historian Girolamo da Potenza who not only drafted the chronicle of the monastery, now preserved at the Municipal Museum of Padua (BP 829 and partially copied by Dorez p. 266), but around 1609 (?) had written an essay now lost on the frescoes with the title *Elucidario spiegate delle figure storiche e geroglifiche*. This description was also used by Pietro Brandolese, who had seen the frescoes largely preserved, in his work *Pittore, sculture, architettura. . . di Padova* Padua 1795. According to this history Bernardo had finished by 1498 the first ten episodes of the life of St. Benedict, and inscribed under the final one: "Opus Parentini". In another scene Brandolese still managed to read the year 1494, while it seems that until recently the date 1489 was visible under one of these last episodes. Della Valle also states that around 1541 under Ignatius, after an interruption of "forty years" – the history relates that "the other part was made in 1540", – the work and the frescos were begun again and were finished in five or six years. In this part of the frescoes Brandolese identified the inscriptions 1542, 1544 and 1546. These dates, however, contrast with the information provided by J. Cavacius, *Historiarum coenobii S. Justinae Patavinae libri VI*, Venetiis 1606, although in fol. 274 he refers to the works of Hieronymus Potentinus Abbas, namely Girolamo. In fol. 251 (reproduced in Dorez, *Études Aldines* cit., p. 261) there is provided the date 1490 near the phrase "decem intercolumnia tantum pinxit Parentinus, quorum postremum habet exequias Sancti Patriarchae et ad latus Inscriptionum opus Parentini. Reliquum ab eo quod expectabatur elaboratus morte desiit", then in fol. 274 next to the date 1542, is written: "eodem tempore noster Abbas (Ignatius) pingendum contulit claustrum Hieronymo Patavino egregio pictori. Id olim a Parentino inchoatum ultra quinquaginta annos ab ipsius obitu imperfectum reman-

the woodcuts of the *Hypnerotomachia* and among them are also many of the hieroglyphs described above. From then on Federici, who had seen more than twenty scenes, poses the question whether or not this work had at least provided a model for Colonna. Federici had supposed, and recently Dorez bore out this hypothesis, that the remaining hieroglyphs in the frescoes can be attributed to Bernardo. There remained little hope of finding further confirmation because it seems that the paintings have been destroyed almost completely, while the reproductions of Mengardi engraved on copper at the end of the 18th century (at least those seen by Dorez) seem to indicate that the artist was Girolamo rather than Bernardo. Therefore even if future archival discoveries were able to validate the claim of Bernardo, it could not be inferred that the cycle was a model for Colonna. A similar conclusion could be reached, apart from the

The anonymous *b* referred to nt. 53 could have been added at any of these later stages.

serat". Therefore, according to the record and the information of Della Valle, Bernardo had begun the work in 1498, while according to Cavaccius he had already died in 1490. For our exposition we have to rely on what Brandolese says about the date of 1494 in the series of frescoes attributed to Parentino, because this fits more or less with the information provided by the chronicle. Cavaccius is also unclear about the election of Abbot Gasparo. On fol. 250 he adds the date 1482, "rediit secundo Gaspare Papiensis et quinquennium rexit, quo etiam absolvit claustrum majus . . . Idem claustrum partem, quae ad meridiem spectat, curavit a Bernardo Parentino, pictori diligentissimo, qui super recenti caemento res gestas a Benedicto pictura referret", continuing next to the date 1491, "exacto quinquennio Gaspar successorem accepit D. Theophilum". According to these figures Bernardo should have already been working on the frescoes for more than five years. Probably the contradiction is due to the fact that Cavaccius forgot to consider, in the dates in the margin, the years of the commission preceding Gasparo. In fact, while 1481 is set as the beginning of the first period, which lasted three years, the information is missing that on the expiration of that period he was succeeded by Antonius Maurus, who died the same year as his appointment. Since Gasparo succeeded to the office for the second time after the death of Maurus, Cavaccius should have written in the margin that the year of this second appointment was not 1482, but 1484 or even 1485. Given the inaccuracies of Cavaccius on this point, it seems appropriate to consider, as Della Valle said who knew the chronicle, that the year 1482 was the one in which Gasparo, in his capacity as Abbot, had decided to paint the walls of the convent. The dating of Cavaccius should be considered only if it agrees with the other records. The completion of the building and the beginning of the paintings, therefore, should be placed in Gasparo's second period in office which ended in 1490. In any case, one should examine the original documents in a definitive way to answer the question raised by Dorez as to whether Bernardo can be considered as the Anonymous *b* of the woodcuts of the *Poliphilo*. Since many woodcuts stylistically similar to those of the *Hypnerotomachia* appeared in 1497 and the years immediately following, it should not be considered that he was the author since his work had been interrupted, as Cavaccius suggests, by his death in 1490.

previous dating of the hieroglyphs, from the efforts that Colonna had made to impress his own creativity on the elements that he had borrowed. Even the other information about the convent frescoes suggests that his ideas were original.

During the eighth decade of the fifteenth century Abbot Gasparo occupied this office more than once. The first time he was appointed for three years and then, after the death of his successor after a year in office, he was reappointed for another five, so had remained as abbot until the end of 1490. During the second period he had completed the construction of a large convent building and started the decoration. The chronicle of Girolamo Potenza, written in the late sixteenth century, reports that the choice of fabrics, the "figures, and figural history of the Romans, fables of poets, sepulchres et stones or fragments with different literary inscriptions, Egyptian emblems and other ingenious things" had been made personally by the abbot. Since the chronicler as a young man had met Girolamo del Santo, the painter of the frescoes added later, who undoubtedly knew of these previous events, his report cannot be doubted. It remains open whether Colonna alone had provided the abbot Gasparo with the material for his hieroglyphic program.

Although the abbot Gasparo is described as a "man of great worth, esteemed not only for his sanctity but also for his teaching" and as author of a work on the instruction of novices,⁵⁴ nothing of his has survived except for his activities in the arts. Compared to Gasparo, Colonna, belonging fully to the cultural movements of the time, was always sensitive to the understanding and dissemination of any artistic inspiration, as well as being fully involved in hieroglyphic studies. In such matters he had assumed great prominence and it would be enough to make this account plausible that Colonna, far from being influenced by the abbot, was actually the person who had provided Gasparo with the opportunity for the hieroglyphic decoration.

This hypothesis seems even more plausible when one considers that in some of the paintings officially attributed to Bernardo can be seen according to the description by Girolamo da

⁵⁴ See also Cavaccius cit., fol. 250: "vir quidem eximiae sanctitatis et doctrinae, cuius argumentum asservamus libellum de educatione novitiorum". On the choice of the subject of the frescoes by Gasparo, see fol. 251: "His (res gestae a Benedicto) dictante Abbate historias veteris ac novi testamenti, Hieroglyphica, simbola et moralitates ex fabulis etiam veterum mira diligentia concinnavit".

Potenza, “branches of flowers, the skull of a bull, an upright snake, the rudder of a ship, a burning altar”, and hieroglyphs which alluded to the arrival in Rome of St Benedict.⁵⁵ And even if Girolamo had not explicitly stated that “this frieze” was “an ancient stone from San Lorenzo extra muros [sic] in Rome”, one could still appreciate the striking similarity between the frescoes painted by Bernardo and the frieze from this church today preserved in the Capitoline Museums. The frescoes of Bernardo and the woodcuts by Colonna have then the same source, that is this relief that the latter had carefully studied. It may therefore have been Colonna who informed Gasparo, inventor of the “history”, about what was known of the frieze. Moreover, there were several points of contact at various levels to connect the two people then living in Padua, not least the fact that Colonna at the time frequented the library of Gasparo’s monastery, famous for its treasures, not only to satisfy his curiosity for humanism, but also to complete his training as *magister*. It therefore seems difficult to deny that the two scholars would not have met there, since they were united by their passion for the study of hieroglyphs and their common experiences in teaching. During these meetings Colonna must have shared with Gasparo his ideas which, when he later became abbot, Gasparo could have used in 1482 for the frescoes by Bernardo.

Even the events that had accompanied the resumption of these wall decorations under Abbot Ignatius show traces of the influence of Colonna, at least as regards the hieroglyphs. In fact during that time there was appointed a committee of “writers, historians, hieroglyphic experts, poets, theologians”, which had the task of establishing the details necessary to continue the spirit of the work already begun.⁵⁶ The committee consisted of four monks: D. Giarolamo Lippi or Cataneo,

⁵⁵ See the extract from the chronicle in Dorez II, cit., p. 266. Girolamo describes first the ten “pictures” of Parentino: a frieze below the second scene contained the hieroglyphs listed above, while the first scene depicted a summary of the entire work, with respect to which Girolamo refers to the “mystical exposition” of his *Elucidario*. For the interpretation of the signs we rely on Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., and C. Ripa, *Iconologia*, Rome 1593. The chronicle was written, therefore, not before the end of the sixteenth century, seeing that in 1606, when Cavaccius used it, it was already complete, so that the date 1609, read by Brandolese in the the manuscript of the *Elucidario*, can hardly refer to the period when it was being drafted.

⁵⁶ See Cavaccius cit., fol. 274: “delecti sunt ex doctioribus hujus congregationis quattuor viri, qui, ut olim Gaspar Papiensis coeperat, totum opus exornarent varia doctrina, nempe historiis, simbolis, hieroglyphicis, inscriptionibus et id genus aliis”.

Prospero de Treviso, Guglielmo de Pontremoli and Angelo Mossiolo, all professors from Padua, Parma and Brescia. One can assume it was a result of the proposal of these scholars that there were depicted those hieroglyphs that literally mimic the enigmatic images of the *Hypnerotomachia*.

Thus, without the necessity of questioning the originality of Colonna's imagination, this explains not only the correspondence between the two works, but also confirms the impression of Dorez who seeing the engravings by Mengardi had judged these hieroglyphs as being later from a stylistic point of view. The "hieroglyphs" of Abbot Ignatius in fact seemed to capture better the spirit of the earlier frescoes in as much as they were based on what had inspired them originally, namely the *Hypnerotomachia* which had been published in the meantime and which seemed to offer a convenient collection of models. Such a choice was much easier since time had resolved the question of who was the author of the work, who had just died in 1527.⁵⁷

Around 1540 the influence of Colonna on the projects of Gasparo had therefore not been forgotten, despite the more than 60 years that had passed since he had been in Padua between 1473 and 1481, when the author had had the opportunity to suggest to the future abbot paintings and hieroglyphics for the monastery building.

If, then, it was in Padua that Colonna had been able to make use of his expertise in hieroglyphics to create his new work, one must conclude that in those years he had not just limited his studies to developing the text that he was preparing, but he had completely finished it at least in respect of his choice of hieroglyphs and their formal character although this does not mean that individual hieroglyphs did not undergo changes later. Of course, the university environment must have facilitated the pursuit of such studies, but it is very likely that Colonna had received an even greater impetus by the reading of *De re aedificatoria*, in which Alberti had discussed the close link between science and art, developing the idea that hieroglyphs, precisely because of the universality of their language, were particularly suited for the purpose of decorating a work of art. At this moment then the author of the *Hypnerotomachia* must have taken from his reading of Alberti's work the incentive to revise what he had planned, to devise the inscription on the sarcophagus in order to make it seem in tune with

⁵⁷ See above ch. 4 nt. 6.

the ideas of Alberti and with that to come to the aid of the Abbot. It follows that Colonna must have had available to him in Padua the *De re aedificatoria* because, as we have said, a copy of this work had, prior to 1481, already reached the city of Venice. What the author had been able to obtain and absorb in Rome from the master, was thus deepened and matured in Padua by the study of Alberti's work, thus contributing to even greater improvement to the *Hypnerotomachia*.

☛ *Colonna's Hieroglyphs and the philosophy of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola*

It seems unlikely that Colonna had stopped work on his novel while staying in Venice where his presence is documented from the late fall of 1481. On the other hand, the little information concerning his life prior to the publication of the *Hypnerotomachia* reveals that this period was characterized by professional commitments. Federici reported that in 1485 the Convent of San Paolo in Treviso had instructed him to demand a certain sum in Venice that was owed to them. Also, a note from the *liber consiliorum* of his home convent refers to *magister* Colonna as a Sacristan, and even if this note was not added until 1500, it is very likely that he had already played this role earlier.⁵⁸ In any case, not less than 18 years passed between the first mention of Colonna in Venice in 1481 and the publication of *Hypnerotomachia*, a period long enough to assume that the author was busy at his work. Indeed, we are inclined to assume that even during these years he had the opportunity to return to Rome, the city that had inspired him the most and for which he nurtured the greatest nostalgia, and that this visit rekindled the flame in him that burned all through his text although apart from his constant enthusiasm for the city, there is no other evidence to support this hypothesis. So even if it is impossible to determine if the hieroglyphic passages of the *Hypnerotomachia*, which we discuss below, were due to a fresh Roman inspiration, its contents at least show that even after 1481 Colonna did not forget to include the results of new research in his novel.

This relates to an extremely curious monument depicting, according to the outline provided by the preface, "the Holy Trinity in hieroglyphic figures that is in sacred Egyptian sculptures" and this monument has contributed most to awakening and keeping alive admiration for the mysterious content of his work:

⁵⁸ Federici cit., p. 99; for other dates on Venice see Popelin cit., p. XCIII

lvi *Hypnerotomachia* cit., fol. hIV^r. As Pozzi - Ciapponi, cit., p. 121 point out the concepts expressed here may derive from the *Timaeus* 31b. "Hence, in beginning to construct the body of the All, God was making it of fire and earth. But it is not possible that two things alone should be conjoined without a third" (trans. Perseus project).

it is a construction, which the author also called "Obelisk", located in the middle of a meadow and surrounded by a peristyle, which Poliphilo discovers on his way from Queen Eleuterilida.^{lvi} The building consists of three geometric solids stacked one above the other: a cube, a cylinder and a prism. On this last rested three imaginary animals which support a pyramid; on the cylinder are engraved "three hieroglyphic characters", that is a sun, a rudder and a receptacle containing fire. From the angles of the prism project cornucopias held up by figures of women and on each side of the pyramid can be seen a circle and the letters of an inscription "O Ω N", as well as other figures indicating the meaning of the individual Greek elements. According to Logistica, the whole set expresses the harmony of heaven from, and no doubt through, the fact that "these figures with their perpetual affinity and conjunction are noble antique monuments and Egyptian hieroglyphs whose hidden message tells you this: *Divinae infinitaeque trinitate unius essentiae*" [to the divine and infinite trinity, one in essence].

Colonna provides this *mysterium* with a long explanation: the square shape of the cube, derives from unity, the beginning and duration represent the divine; the circle of the cylinder represents infinity and the prism represents the Trinity. The triangle of the pyramid refers to the concept of present, while the "characters" of the sun, the rudder and the cup full of fire signify the creative power, the wisdom that comes with authority⁵⁹ and the love of the divine, whose overall effect is expressed by the cornucopia. According to the inscriptions in Greek placed under the fantastic animals, to which Colonna, following the model of the Sphinx, gives a lion-shaped body and a face that is part lion and part human, these represent the indescribable, inscrutable and impenetrable nature of the whole, an idea also reflected in the choice of materials and color of each part.

What is most striking in the description of this Egyptian monument is primarily that the separate parts are called "hieroglyphic figures", while "hieroglyphic characters" refer to signs that illustrate the words. However, this distinction quickly disappears and Colonna does not hesitate to give the symbols the value of individual words, thus arriving at a reading of the sentence inscribed on the base of all the architectural elements. In short, we are in the presence of the revitalization of the medi-

⁵⁹ For the hieroglyph of "fear" see Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 337.

eval use, particularly evident in the Romanesque, of adopting theological concepts for architectural elements or sculpture.^{60,lvii} All this is in the spirit of the humanistic study of hieroglyphics, not in the sense that the author intended by imitating models of Romanesque or Gothic (in fact this was historically impossible) but by way of an imitation of Alberti, particularly obvious here, whose printed work must have been available to Colonna after 1485.

The mystical structure described by Colonna is found in a landscape resembling a garden, which recalls an unusual suggestion by Alberti recording columns adorned with fantastic elements which were thought to be particularly well-suited to parks. What is certain is that Alberti justified this deviation from what were the strict principles of classical columns as a result of the private nature of such a construction, thus even suggesting a "lepiditas" [elegant] composition, while the construction in the *Hypnerotomachia*, although presenting a composite form resembling a column, instead aims to make a striking impression as a result of the deep seriousness of its wisdom. This autonomous development of an idea of Alberti by Colonna is emphasized repeatedly by the shape of the individual elements that make up the pillar of the Trinity. Thus Alberti had visualized the three-dimensional figures on the tomb of Archimedes as Egyptian symbols. Colonna follows in his footsteps when he not only adopts in his construction, a triangular pyramid, a figure often discussed by Alberti, but also gives the quotation in the *De re aedificatoria* from Diodorus, according to which such a pyramid was built by order of Zarina, Queen of the Saci of Scythia.⁶¹

Despite this close connection to the work of Alberti, whose manuscript version must have been available to Colonna for study from the time of his stay in Padua,^{lviii} this does not allow us to trace the dating of this obelisk-column to the last phase of the *Hypnerotomachia*. On the contrary, thanks to the use of

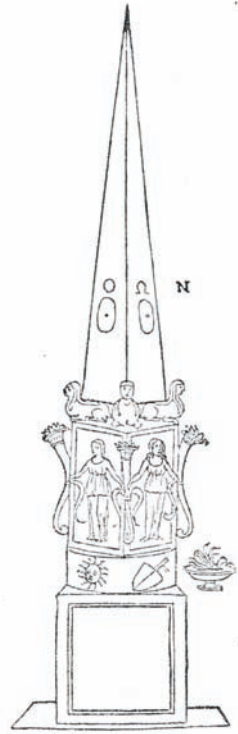


Fig. 26 Hieroglyph from Colonnas *Hypnerotomachia* Poliphili – Aldus 1499 – *The divine trinity*

lvii The St. Albans Psalter is a beautifully illuminated manuscript written in the 1130s and consisting of five separate sections. A full commentary and images can be found at [http://www.abdn.ac.uk/~lib399/\(10/17/2012\)](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/~lib399/(10/17/2012)). Adolph Goldschmidt (1863-1944), mentioned by Giehlow in note 60 was a German medieval art historian, the full title of whose dissertation was *Der Albanipsalter in Hildesheim und Seine Beziehung zur Symbolischen Kirchenskulptur des 12. Jahrhunderts* of 1895.

lviii Here as earlier (see the text above) Giehlow is uncertain as to whether Colonna could have read the *De Re Aedificatoria* in manuscript or whether he would have had to wait to see the printed version after 1485.

⁶⁰ See A. Goldschmidt, *Der Albanipsalter*, Berlin 1895.

⁶¹ See *De re aedificatoria*, cit. for the columns in the buildings and gardens, fol. CXXXVII where there is also the suggestion to erect "ubi opus robustissimum esse opus voluissent quadrangula columna, cui dimidia rotunda hinc atque altera hinc dimidia promineret". For the triangular pyramids see ch. III (De sacellis, pyramidibus, columnais, aris) where we read: "Pyramidem alii portasse triangulam, reliqui omnes quadrangulam efficere". Moreover, in fol. CXX, "Zarinae Sacorum reginae sepulchrum fuit pyramis trilatera et in summo colossus aureus". Colonna compares his mystical obelisk with "the tomb of Zarina queen of the Sace".

the sphinxes and lions one can see a further reference to the widespread belief in Rome regarding similar figures which were found with the buried part of the Vatican obelisk, a fact that would allow us to assume that the invention of this architectural group dates from the period of the author's permanent stay in Rome. The dating of the development of this strange architectural design to the last period of revision of his work, could only be definitely determined by the theosophical interpretation of the One and Its components based on the mystical philosophy that, after Marsilio Ficino, was particularly taken up by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.

This concept of Pico, which is based on the syncretistic writings of antiquity such as those of Hermes Trismegistus and which tries to harmonize the various systems of philosophy with each other and with Christianity, corresponds to the column-obelisk of Colonna, where different aspects of similar speculation are symbolically intermixed. The square, the expression of divinity, the triangle, the symbol of time and the circle of infinity date back to the τετράκτυς, τριάς (four, three) and to the ἄπειρον [infinite] of Pythagoras so much admired by Pico while the prism, the symbol of the Trinity, must be assumed to be an addition made by Colonna himself.

The idea of representing the central dogma of Christianity through ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs may seem unusual, but it is much less surprising when one thinks of the hieroglyph of the cross as a symbol of life to come, a fact that we have already referred to several times.^{lix} This remarkable representation that Gentile Bellini had already depicted on an obelisk in one of his paintings showing the preaching of St. Mark, was the center of much debate at the time.^{lii} Marsilio Ficino, Pico's close friend, thought it was a "virtutis paesagium, quae in Christo esset acceptura". [a scene of virtue, in which Christ was to be accepted]. By the same token, Colonna also invented a hieroglyphic representation of the Trinity, just to show that it appeared in the original revelation. Since Pythagorean doctrines, which were believed to have an Egyptian origin, were adopted at the same time, it can be assumed that Colonna, following Pico della Mirandola who believed that Egyptian philosophy was the source

^{lii} See Dempsey cit. and ch. 4 nt. xxxii above.

^{lii} Rufinus, Socrates and later Cassiodorus had a lively discussion on the symbol of the cross as a hieroglyph, see above, pp. 25 and 36. In his treatise *De vita coelitus comparanda* of the 10 July 1489 dedicated to Matthias Corvinus (see *Opera cit.*, p. 556), Marsilio Ficino writes: "Inter (Aegyptiorum) characteres crux una erat insignis, vitam eorum more futuram significans eamque figuram pectori Serapidis insculpebant".

of all pagan wisdom, realized also that it was the key to uniting ancient philosophical teachings with Christian doctrine.

These profound speculations had a particular momentum after 1486 when Pico made known his intention to defend his "*conclusiones philosophicae, cabalisticae et theologicae*" [philosophical, cabalistic and theological conclusions] in Rome. Pico's ideas were diffused widely soon reaching the ears of Colonna, for whom they must have become, he being a teacher of theology, a subject of reflection and must have given him a valid reason to include them in hieroglyphic form in his Dream.⁶³

Thus in the first period of his hieroglyphic studies Colonna seems to maintain the spirit of Roman monuments, then, in the period from Padua, he seems influenced by the study of architecture and only in the last stage does he show that he is also subject to the influence of the mystical and philosophical currents of the time.

☞ Colonna's Hieroglyphs and Figurative Art

The transformation of hieroglyphic thought thus inspired the poetic character of the author who time after time felt the very strong need to express his subject matter in this medium. This raises the question: was he possibly also the artist who illustrated the *Hypnerotomachia*? Scholars like Temanza and Federici^{lx} accepted this without hesitation but since Ilg the situation has changed. Only the presentation of additional evidence concerning the study of hieroglyphics in the humanistic period would allow us to outline an answer to this question.

Through numerous examples Colonna not only wanted to prove his knowledge of Greek, Hebrew and Arabic texts, but also to show his ability to write in hieroglyphs which, being essentially pictorial, required the development of individual images. All this is obvious from the inscription on the sarcophagus. Here the author must have used an image, since it is impossible to deduce the hieroglyphs from the text. Of course, the original model might have been drawn by some other hand but since however some of the engraved hieroglyphs are a true copy of the reliefs that Colonna had directly observed, it is very likely that he did not limit himself to copying, but also created the hieroglyphs themselves from his sketches. In so doing however, Colonna failed to grasp the characteristic features of the Egyptian style, as seen for example in the two ibis which

^{lx} See ch. 4 nt. 7 above for citations to Temanza and Federici.

⁶³ See *Joannis Pici Mirandulae Opera omnia*, Basileae 1601. In particular, one of the Conclusions discusses the merits of Hermes Trismegistus. Another essay of Pico is entitled *De ente et uno*.

indicate Egypt, although he understood well enough the frieze of the Roman temple. This ambivalence must then be explained by the lack of any formal critique.

But if we assume that the author copied these hieroglyphs, one might think that, even in the case of his other architectural constructions, he did not limit himself only to taking notes, but must also have been using the pencil, since he followed Alberti's instructions closely in regard to the measurement and design of monuments; this could certainly be expected in those cases where the text makes reference to images. But starting with the differences, which become very apparent in the description of the beautiful wooden portal where the text explicitly refers to the missing letters, Ilg felt able to say that Colonna could not in any way be the illustrator of the *Hypnerotomachia*.⁶⁴ In so doing he implicitly underestimated the long gestation period of the work before its final realization.

Colonna could not have submitted the sketches of the hieroglyphs to Leonardo Crasso when he solicited the printing of the work. Everything must have happened in the final stage, when the sketches could be redesigned with greater accuracy. In the dedication to Crasso there is an allusion to a text finally ready for the press: "Venit nuper in manus meas . . . Poliphili opus, quod, ne diutius lateret . . . sumptibus meis imprimendum et publicandum curavi" [recently there has come into my hands. . . a work of Poliphilo, which so that it shall not remain in darkness (be further delayed). . . I have had printed and published at my own expense]. While the eulogy to the same edition reads, "si quae res natura sua difficiles essent . . . figuris et imaginibus oculis subjectae patent et referuntur". [although these things are difficult by their nature . . . they are presented with many illustrations and images for the eyes]. Here Crasso seems to give the impression that the manuscript with its accompanying images had encouraged him to undertake the printing.

There are two possibilities that may explain a mismatch between text and images which could have been in the original text. The first might have occurred at the time the work was copied, the second when it was in the press. Colonna may have provided the designs to the copyist, but he also could have made use of some designs by separate artists.⁶⁵ And since the copy was intended to serve as a model for the cutter, I am personally

⁶⁴ Ilg cit., p. 129; as well as Popelin cit., p. CCI according to B. Fillon.

⁶⁵ The hypothesis was that in this case it was B. Parentino who worked for Colonna even if the monogram B is the symbol of the cutter.

inclined to believe that this is the most likely hypothesis. The intervention of a third party may just have been the source of these misunderstandings.^{lxi} But even assuming that during the copying process the close supervision of the copyist by Colonna might have eliminated mistakes, one can always believe that the press itself may have been responsible for further errors, especially since Colonna, just to retain his anonymity, could not have been involved in personal control, as can be seen from the long list of errata in the edition of the work from the Aldine press.⁶⁶ Given then that the originals might not have been the same size as those adopted by the press, and that therefore they must have been transferred, this easily explains the errors alleged by Ilg, although it does not exclude the possibility that Colonna had created the original designs. The fact is that during one of these stages, the depiction of a ring of snakes that Colonna describes very precisely with the motto “*velocitate sedendo*” was omitted. A further question would be to determine the extent to which Colonna provided the sketches for the cutters who later worked on the *Hypnerotomachia*. But for the purpose of the present essay it is enough merely to ascertain the reasons why Colonna can at least be considered as the one to make the first sketches of his hieroglyphs in concept.

^{lxi} It is quite likely that Colonna did make preliminary sketches for his pictures. See nt. lv above.

There were various versions of the hieroglyphs of the *Hypnerotomachia*, which were produced over several decades, and their final arrangement in the manuscript that Crasso gave to Aldus for printing was therefore only one of these. One can only speculate on the date of completion of this particular version. According to the dedication mentioned above, written by the editor shortly before the compilation of the errata (December 1499), Colonna’s work was just – “*nuper*” – received in the hands of Crasso. As such this is a claim that must be understood in a broad sense and the fact is that it must refer to a period exceeding twelve months, partly because execution of woodcuts usually had a very long gestation period. According to Ilg, evidence to establish the date could be provided with an inscription bearing the date MIID. This part of the inscription however, is not carved on the wooden block, but on a reusable frame. Moreover, even excluding this observation, M and D do not indicate numbers but rather, as is clear from the context, are ways of indicating months and days (*menses et dies*) in an abbreviated form.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Popelin cit., p. CXCIV.

⁶⁷ Reproduced in Ilg cit., p. 58. The end of the entry says something like: “*vix. ann. XIX.M.II.D.IX. horas scit nemo*”.

Apart from that, Ilg could still be right in saying that they worked on the cuts in 1498. But, in view of the fact that Crasso wrote that he himself was taking steps to have it published, “ne (opus) diutius lateret” [so that it will be (a work) no longer hidden], as is clear from the accompanying letter, the completion of the manuscript actually dates back to a previous period. Thus, since the last hieroglyphic script refers to currents of thought from the eighties, it can be assumed that Colonna must have completed his work around the beginning of the last decade of the fifteenth century. That the author had to wait a long period to get a publisher may reflect the difficulty of finding sponsors willing to promote the work. The references, although vague, to the de Lelli family suggest that Colonna had initially relied on the help of this family which had remained influential even after the death of the bishop.

It is not by chance that the *Hypnerotomachia* with its countless hieroglyphs is dedicated to Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, son of the great Federico, whose medal, created in 1468, has previously been mentioned as one of the first examples of Renaissance hieroglyphics. It may be even that Crasso fostered a similar interest as Guidobaldo and that he had decided to publish the work of Colonna for this very reason.

In fact, Colonna's hieroglyphs allowed contemporaries to get a surprisingly accurate picture of the mysterious science concerning the interpretation and the writing of this language. Still they are also important for art historical research mainly because Colonna, who had strong artistic qualities, had close ties with artists, and had designed his hieroglyphs so that they could act as models. Even ignoring the creation *ex professo* [with expert knowledge] of his hieroglyphs, he in fact gives us many examples of their practical uses, which helps us understand what his views were on the matter.

Unaware of the existence of phonetic values, Colonna sought, like his contemporary Anniius, and as would Zoega three centuries later, to extrapolate the symbolic significance that had been passed down through this vast quantity of figures and that essentially corresponded to the individual hieroglyphs described by Diodorus, Ammianus and Macrobius, those signs to which could be attributed the meaning of “characters” in view of the fact that “litterae – γράμματα –” had been called hieroglyphs by the ancient authors. The solution of Zoega would be to affirm that “id enim hieroglyphicis proprium est, ut quoad figuram pictura, quoad ordinem litterae”, [for it is proper to con-

sider the meaning of hieroglyphs, as much from the figures of the characters, as from their order] thus assuming for all other Egyptian monuments that “quae figuris, actione aut dispositione inter se junctis et connexis factum aliquid expriment sive historicum sive mythicum sive allegoricum” [these figures, either joined and connected with each other by some action or disposition, express some fact whether historical, mythical or allegorical].⁶⁸ In contrast to this Colonna had to take a hieroglyphic meaning just from the “affinitas et conjunctio” [affinity and conjunction]^{lxiii} shown by these symbols. You cannot expect from Colonna, who worked at the peak of the time when all these impressions were transmitted from antiquity and who confused Egyptian and Roman styles, the critical perception of a Zoega who was able to make a distinction, albeit in a crude and purely formal way, between different Egyptian hieroglyphic symbols. It is in fact of great interest to the beginning of the study of hieroglyphics that Colonna as one of the first scholars in this field sometimes had luminous insights, and on occasion, far more than his successors, he recognized “hieroglyphic characters” in some sculptural reliefs by reference to the obelisks, as well as identifying sculptures in the round as “hieroglyphic figures”. As for the interpretation of these signs given by Colonna, we must also take into account that, despite his mistakes, he always followed a certain method and assumed that one could identify a hieroglyphic interpretation only where there were citations or ancient coins which related to Egypt.

lxiii This phrase refers to the explanation by Logistica of the meaning of the signs on the di-vine obelisk; see above p. 148.

For this reason the author never felt able to give a hieroglyphic value to the many depictions of animals that are found in Roman mosaics, on the grounds that certain images are not conducive to symbolic interpretations. Poliphilo cites, for example, “mulletts, lampreys and many others” which he sees on the mosaic floor of a basin as “various emblematura in wonderful depictions”. In the case of his sight of these antique originals at this location, Colonna does not propose an interpretive sense, believing that the figures were only simple decorations. So later his position would change, especially when he repeats the words of Vitruvius, according to which the architect must have “graphidos scientiam” [a knowledge of drawing or inscription], interpreted as alluding to the ability to write with hieroglyphs.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Zoega. *De origine* cit., p. 438.

⁶⁹ *Hypnerotomachia* cit., fol. eV^v, The term “emblemature” [sic] also appears on fol. N in the following context: “the remaining walls of the temple were encrusted with numerous and variform emblematura in precious marble

In his interpretation, therefore, on the whole Colonna kept within strict limits as he sought to trace the ancient symbolism of the hieroglyphs. Nevertheless his criteria for hieroglyphic representation was based in the last analysis on a purely subjective assessment but compared to the vague definitions of Annius, his postulate of “affinitas et conjunctio” for these figures gives us further food for thought. When a humanist could see images which seemed to reveal some symbolic references he thus had reason to suppose he was facing an enigmatic hieroglyph. But when such relationships could not be found between images, they were not subjected to interpretation and were considered mere ornament.

Colonna thus gave to his contemporaries a full demonstration of how it was possible to represent sentences word for word through images that follow one after the other or that were grouped together. The novelty for the study of hieroglyphics lay precisely in this conscious assessment of the symbols in a grammatical sense, whereas previously they had instead been used, as in the verses of the Psalms, to express concepts that were incorporated in entire phrases. Having rejected the idea of using depictions for his hieroglyphs in the sense of homonyms like “stemmi parlanti”^{lxiv} and instead, especially in the field of ethics, employing his extensive knowledge of the classics in order to infer conceptual images of the characteristics of certain animals and objects, Colonna then gave a further impetus to the discovery of the deep significance of these symbols in the same spirit as the ancients. Not only that. Above all, his examples emphasized the great importance of such exercises for figurative decoration. Setting on one side the use of hieroglyphs in sculpture, Colonna also describes an embroidery on a silk banner, which features the phrase “amor omnia vincit” [love conquers all], as well as the hieroglyph of a vase filled with flames, a willow branch and a globe.^{70, lxv} The author does not confine himself to sculpture to represent hieroglyphs, but instead explicitly

^{lxiv} “Stemmi parlante” or “armes parlantes” was a technical term in the blazon of a coat of arms where the heraldic elements reflect the name of the bearer of the arms: thus a kind of rebus. An example given and deprecated by Camden in the *Remaines concerning Britain* of 1629 is an A on the step of a ladder (a rundle) to illustrate the name Arundel.

^{lxv} This is a simple pun; the Latin for a willowbranch is “vinco” which also has the meaning “I conquer”.

... perhaps such as was made for Ammon”. Vitruvius, bk. 1, ch. 1, observes: “deinde graphidos scientiam habere, quo facilius exemplaribus pictis quam velit operis speciem deformare valeat”. For the hieroglyphic interpretations of this passage, refer to the note of Guilielmus Philander in the edition of Vitruvius (Lugduni 1552). A later age had a tendency to interpret the mosaics with representations of fish in the sense of Horapollon as is illustrated by G. P. Bellori *Le pitture antiche delle Grotte di Roma*, Roma 1706, pl. XXIII, where they are represented not only as mermaids but also as “octopi” and “squid”.

⁷⁰ *Hypnerotomachia* cit., fol. sIII.

broadens their applicability to any form of craftsmanship and in any material.

Actually apart from the term “*emblematura*”, there are found in the *Hypnerotomachia* many ideas which are the basis of those later collections of symbolic images, those models for the use of artists which came to be called “*Emblemata*”. What are missing are only the accompanying epigrams and as soon as you reach the obvious intuition that these hieroglyphs, appropriately chosen to reveal deep insights, could be described with a few short lines of verse, you have that emblematic form that would inspire the visual arts and literature for centuries to come.

CHAPTER 5

¶ HIEROGLYPHIC STUDIES IN THE ITALIAN CINQUECENTO

☞ *Angelo Poliziano and the study of Hieroglyphs in Florence at the close of the Quattrocento*

The study of hieroglyphics which continued to develop in Florence helped reinforce this trend. After the fruitful start Colonna had had with Niccolò, he took up these studies again in the last decade of the fifteenth century. It has already been mentioned that he had made extensive use of Marsilio Ficino for the development of his mystical philosophy and that Giovanni Pico della Mirandola had inspired him in his theological speculation on Egyptian wisdom; his interest in hieroglyphics, however, was not limited to philosophy, but also involved poetry which he studied as a result of discussions about these symbols in Florence.

As his predecessors in the study of hieroglyphics in Florence, Pierio Valeriano records the names of Angelo Poliziano and Pietro Crinito¹. Both enjoyed a reputation at the time as excellent poets, a reputation maintained later only by Poliziano, Crinito's teacher. According to the statement of Valeriano the two poets, together with Filippo Beroaldo of Bologna, were actually the first to have studied aspects of the science of hieroglyphics. But as evidenced by the examples of Niccolò, Ciriaco, Alberti, Colonna and others, Valeriano is incorrect, even if one should not doubt what he tells us in respect of the things that were of interest to these two scholars. As we have seen and as far as Beroaldo is concerned this remark is confirmed in the commentaries quoted above.² At this point it is appropriate therefore to dwell on Poliziano and Crinito in their roles as hieroglyphic scholars.

Given that Poliziano only mentions ancient symbols occasionally in his works in print without pursuing a comprehensive discussion of hieroglyphics, we must suppose that Valeri-

¹ Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., written at the end of the "epistola nuncupatoria": "Mihi igitur vitio verti non debet, si omnem operam et studium ad harum rerum explicationem contulerim, quas tanto in pretio a praestantissimis quibusque semper habitas novimus. Angelo Politiano, Petro Crinito, Philippo Beroaldo summae laudi datum, quod primi unum vel alterum ex his locum interpretati sint".

² See above, p. 57.

ano had in mind some other unedited works. And this can also be assumed from Crinito's letters to Alexandro Sarto, where he mentions the great mass of writings that Poliziano left unedited.³ In this correspondence they talk of the continuation of a Miscellany published in Florence in 1489,ⁱ in which Poliziano, in the style of the *σπρώματα* of Clement of Alexandria, had collected criticism, mythology, antiques and coins and in which the humanist had compiled a treatise on Osiris. Since, from the greetings sent by Crinito from Sarto to Aldus one can assume that, after the death of Poliziano, the Venetian publisher had in mind a fuller edition of the works of the poet than had been undertaken in 1498, and since, at Aldus' request that he should send to Venice all the works of Poliziano that were in the Medicean Library, Crinito had indeed for this purpose sent the printer some manuscripts, it is possible that Valeriano, who had been in contact with Aldus through his uncle Fra Urbano,⁴ had taken from these the information about Poliziano's study of the hieroglyphs. As Valeriano had later had the opportunity to use the Medicean library, which was transferred to Rome in 1508 and then finally established in Florence in 1527, it may be that this is how he obtained a complete picture of Poliziano's literary heritage.

A source that could have provided very interesting information concerning the treatment of hieroglyphs by the Platonic Academy is therefore lost, or at least dispersed. One can therefore only get an indirect indication of what were the ideas of Poliziano in this respect. A starting point is represented by his contacts with Alberti. In fact, it was Poliziano who wrote the preface for the publication in 1485 of the *De re Aedificatoria* in which he expressed an extraordinary admiration for the universality of the author's genius.⁵ Again you might believe that the personal interests of Poliziano, even before reading this treatise, had already led him to the study of hieroglyphics in the spirit of Alberti.

But the breadth of his interests in this field can also be inferred from his work on Harpocrates contained in the *Miscellanea* cited earlier. In this, Poliziano tells of having given in Venice and Verona in the early eighties lectures on this son of

ⁱ The first century of the *Miscellanea* was published in Florence in 1489 and the second century was never finished but is available in print. See *La incompiuta seconda centuria dei Miscellanea di Angelo Poliziano*, ed. Vittore Branca, Firenze: L. S. Olschki, 1961. A modern edition of the complete works of Politian is *Opera Omnia*, ed. Ida Maier, Turin: Bottega d'Erasmo 1970-1971. For a general discussion see also Anthony Grafton, 'The scholarship of Poliziano and its context', *Defenders of the Text*, Harvard University Press, 1991.

³ See the two letters of Crinito to Alexander Sarto, in Poliziano cit. *Opera Basileae* 1553, "Quae quidem extitere hactenus, omnia", etc. *Epistolarum liber XII*, pp. 180 ff.

⁴ Ticozzi cit., *Vita di Pierio Valeriano Bolzanio*, pp. 85 ff.

⁵ Reprinted in the edition of Poliziano cit., p. 142.

Isis and Osiris based on the essay of Plutarch of the same name.⁶ In this way, Poliziano must have mastered a primary source on ancient Egypt and hieroglyphics, a source which up to that time had scarcely been given consideration although as part of Plutarch's *Moralia* it had been brought to Italy by Ciriaco from the island of Thasos.⁷ Most likely a result of Poliziano's Venetian lectures was to persuade Ermolao Barbaro the Younger shortly after to translate Plutarch's treatise into Latin. The Latin version was not published however, and even the publication of the Greek text had to wait until the early sixteenth century.ⁱⁱ In the circle of the Medicean Academy the information provided by Plutarch became part of the heritage of myths, symbols and allegories as well as Egyptian hieroglyphics, so that the merit of Poliziano was not so much in discovering something new, but in having highlighted the richness of this source of Egyptian antiquities. His lectures must have made a deep impression in Venetian circles providing Valeriano with the opportunity to recognize in him one of the first scholars of hieroglyphics.

This generation of humanists, unlike their predecessors who had to get their information on hieroglyphics from individual authors, was now able to find in Plutarch's treatise all the essentials of the field. Moreover, the subject was expounded from the viewpoint of Platonic philosophy and rendered in a deeply poetic spirit. As regards Egyptology, the importance of Plutarch's description of the circle of the Egyptian gods is today mainly attributed to the fact that the author took as his source the works of authentic Egyptian priests, such as Manetho;⁸ of course, the humanists could not understand that this was an advantage over the uncritical reports of Diodorus on the Egyptian myths or the controversial accounts of Eusebius. Only later would they develop a critical sensitivity to the clas-

ⁱⁱ The first printed edition was by Aldus in 1509. Parthey (see nt. 8 below) cites six manuscripts (unnumbered pages following the Introduction) two of which are stated to be from the 13th century. Wyttenbach in the introduction to his edition (Oxford 1795) has the most extensive account of all sources and editions. Neither of these authors appears to mention Poliziano or the translation by Barbaro.

⁶ Ibid, p. 295. "Nos tamen et Venetiis ac item Veronae . . . abhinc annos octo ferme de eo (Harpocrate) aliquod publice responsitavimus. . . Plutarchus igitur in libro, quem de Iside fuit et de Osiride, Harpocratem scribit ex Iside ipsa natum et Osiride". On the poor circulation of this work of Plutarch see Appendix 2 below. [The letter of Calcagnini is not given in the present edition but can be consulted in the edition cited in the Appendix and note 8 below.]

⁷ On the *Moralia* see Voigt cit., vol. I, p. 279. This journey by Ciriaco through the Greek archipelago took place in the years 1443-1447.

⁸ See G. Parthey *Plutarch über Isis und Osiris*, (Berlin 1850) – Greek text with German translation. For the citations from the Latin text see the translation of C. Calcagnini, published in his *Epistolacarum quaestionum*, bk. XVI, Basle 1544, fol. 229.

sics. At that moment, to the scholars of the Florentine Academy, it certainly appeared far more significant that Plutarch had fused Platonic philosophy with Egyptian thought and by this had confirmed the statements of the highly esteemed philosopher Hermes Trismegistus that Egypt was to be regarded as the place of origin of philosophy; Hermes had contended emphatically that Solon, Thales, Eudoxus, Pythagoras and other Greek scholars had traveled to that country! Right here the Greeks would have learned to admire and even to imitate Egyptian customs and science.⁹ As a result the lessons of the Greek myths were intertwined with Egyptian symbolism and knowledge so that according to Plutarch, the essence of some of the maxims of Pythagoras, such as “do not sit on a bushel”, “do not stoke fire with a sword”, “do not plant a palm” and the like, would not significantly depart from the meaning of some of the hieroglyphs.ⁱⁱⁱ These remarks must therefore have stimulated the humanists even more to follow the Greek example and formulate similar precepts in hieroglyphic form.

With regard to the knowledge of the essential characteristics of the writing system based on hieroglyphs, Plutarch is one of the few authors to mention the existence of an Egyptian alphabet; from him is derived the fact that the number of letters is five squared, that is corresponding to the length of the life of Apis.¹⁰ You can assume from the commentary of Marsilio Ficino on Plato’s *Philebus*, which we discussed earlier,¹¹ that it was a result of this remark that the humanists came to believe in the existence of a script, alongside the hieroglyphs, that used letters; as will be seen shortly, the humanists did not think however, that these remarks actually referred to hieroglyphs. And this is not surprising, because these were short observations concerning the number of examples of enigmatic hieroglyphs, examples which Plutarch in view of his Greek mindset could not have rendered otherwise.

Thus, for example, when Plutarch says that the Egyptians depicted Osiris as King and Lord with an eye and a scepter, it

ⁱⁱⁱ The first two of these *symbola* of Pythagoras also appear in the essay in the *On the Education of Children*, Loeb, *Moralia* I, (1927), pp. 3-69 although there is some doubt as to whether this essay is actually by Plutarch.

⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 231, translates the passage in this way: “Et hic (Pythagoras) profecto maxime omnium miratus et imitatus videtur eorum hominum mores ac disciplina dogmati suo symbola et mysteria quaedam recognita admiscens, quae non sane multum a hieroglyphicis, id est sacris Aegyptiorum literis, absunt. Quale est illud, in curru ne comesto, ne sedeto in choenice, ne palmam piantato, ne domi ignem machaera scindito”.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 239: “Reddit autem quinquarius ex se tetragonum, quota est apud Aegyptios literarum multitudo et quoto aetatis anno Apis vivere desinit”.

¹¹ See above p. 48.

was easy for humanists to see here a confirmation of the claim of Macrobius.¹² Extraordinary proof of the method followed by the humanists for hieroglyphic writing up to that time is the accurate description of the inscriptions from the temples of Sais and Hermopolis. In the first, dedicated to the Athena of Sais, there was shown a child, an old man, a hawk, a fish and above them a hippopotamus, symbols indicating childhood, old age, the gods, hatred and immorality. And since the text of Plutarch was mutilated at this point – in fact you can read only the beginning of the sentence comprising these symbolic images (ὧ γενόμεναι καὶ ἀπογενόμενοι [those who are born and die]) – the hieroglyphic text of the humanists, who turned these sentences into literal symbolic imagery, seemed to be confirmed.^{iv} Anyone who had read his initial words would certainly be forced to interpret the other images in the same way. Later Calcagnini would interpret this phrase as “o senes pariter et juvenes, deum odisse summa impudentia est”, [O young and old alike, it is the highest shamelessness to hate God] while Valeriano, more freely, would read: “nascimur, senescimus, vivimus, morimur naturae dissidio”. [we are born, grow old, we live, we die from the separation of our nature].¹³ Another interpretation of this passage would also be suggested by Poliziano.

^{iv} The lacuna is actually completed from Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, see nt. 14 below.

¹² Calcagnini cit., fol. 231: “Putant et ab eisdem hominibus unitatem Apollinem vocari, binarium Dianam, Minervam septenarium, Neptunum primum cubum. At haec nomina in templis et sacris libris promiscue invenio, sicut et regem Osirim oculo et sceptro scribingunt, quod nomen nonnulli multoculum interpretantur, quod os multum, iri autem oculum significai Aegyptiis. Caelum autem tanquam nescium senectutis ob perpetuitatem corde, cui craticula subjecta fuit, annotabant. Thebis imagines iudicum positae erant sine manibus et, quae inter illas principem significabat, oculis visebatur coniventibus, quod incorrupta quodque inexorabilia iudicia esse debeat. Qui vero disciplinae militari navabant operam, pro sigillo in annulo scarabaeum scalpebant. Ex scarabeis enim nullus foemina, mares omnes semenque suum in pilae formam glomerantes generationi parant. Quotiens itaque audimus haec Aegyptios fabulantes de dis, de eorum genitura et forma et eventibus, nihil ea prorsus debemus existimare, sed mysterium aliquod delitescere in eis conjiciendum est”. Calcagnini did not include in his latest compendium the “weasel” as a hieroglyph of “sermon”.

¹³ Ibid., fol. 237: “Immo vero odium ipsum pisce exprimunt, cui rei testimonium dare potest Minervae propylaeum his notis in Sai descriptum. Primo loco paedogeron, id est puer, senex, post hunc accipiter, subinde piscis superque omnia equus fluvialis visebatur. Significant autem haec omnia symbolica, puer quidem senex recenter natos et defectos, accipiter deum, piscis odium, equus fluvialis impudentiam, quod parentem occidens matri permisceatur. Quasi vero tu ita dixeris”, following the text cited above «nec illud sane multum a Pythagorico dogmate dissidet, qui mare Saturni lachrymam vocant”. For the interpretation of Valeriano see his *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 219°.

It is probable that the solution of Valeriano was based on a conjecture arising out of the Florentine intellectual environment but in any event he did not know the interpretation given by the Greeks themselves and reported in the *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria in respect of a similar series of symbolic images that were found in Diospolis, and according to which the text of Plutarch's treatise should be completed thus: ὧ γεγόνενοι καὶ ἀπογενόμενοι θεὸς μισεῖ ἀναιδέϊαν [those who are born and die, God hates impudence]. Poliziano said he had made extensive extracts of this work from the Fathers, but since Valeriano, who did not know the phrase, gave a different interpretation from Clement, we can assume that this reading of the latter had eluded him. On the other hand, I cannot find any trace in humanistic literature of information about the various hieroglyphic systems contained in the *Stromata*, and this has been confirmed by modern research.¹⁴

Although every humanist was convinced that he had the correct interpretation of the hieroglyphs of Sais, no one had come to the conclusion that such a system of writing was virtually unusable because of the multiplicity of its interpretations; and if any doubt arose, it was quickly stifled by admiration for this Egyptian oracle. The image of the hawk fighting with the snake on the back of a hippopotamus that can be seen in Hermopolis was also considered an example of hieroglyphic script. According to Plutarch, even in this case it could be interpreted by the substitution of words for the images, given that the hippopotamus represented Typhon^v and the hawk represented the power and the strength that defeated it.¹⁵ And just as in the case of the inscription at Sais which Plutarch notes is linked to Pythagorean teaching and according to which the sea signified the tears of Saturn, so the humanists believed that they had

^v Typhon was the youngest son of Gaia and a terrifying monster who defeated Zeus in battle. The latter was rescued by Hercules and Typhon was ultimately trapped beneath Mt. Etna.

¹⁴ The passage of Clement, *Stromata*, V, 7 (ed. J. Potter, Oxon 1715, p. 670) – at Diospolis a hippopotamus was shown instead of the crocodile – is published by Parthey cit., p. 55, to supplement the gap in the text of Plutarch. In respect of the diffusion of manuscript of Clement, see *Clementis Alexandrini Opera ex recensione Gulielmi Dindorfii*, Oxford 1869. The *Stromata* are handed down only in the manuscript of Florence, the other manuscripts report excerpts which, however, do contain some of the important passages on hieroglyphics. Their use is limited due to the late publication, which occurred only in 1550 and for the defective translation which came out the following year, see above, ch. 1 nt. 34 for remarks on hieroglyphics by Clement.

¹⁵ See Calcagini cit., fol. 242: "Sed enim in Hermopoli Typhonis imaginem exprimentes, hippopotamum effingunt, cui accipiter insidet cum serpente depugnans. Et hippopotamus quidem typhonem indicat, accipiter vero vim et potentiam illam, qua retunditur Typhonis impetus".

there one more indication of a series of maxims similar to those of Pythagoras.

Even the remark of Plutarch to the effect that it would have been typical of Egyptian soldiers to use the image of a scarab as a seal ring since these animals were only male, came to appear in the eyes of humanists as an exemplary model for choosing animals with mysterious characteristics that could be used for constructing maxims. In such a way, new impetus was given to the trend, typical of humanism, to discover hieroglyphics in heraldic symbols, especially since Plutarch's treatise seemed to coincide with information provided by Diodorus and Eusebius according to which Egyptians loved animals for their warlike symbolism. From these passages humanists would seem to have confirmed their belief that there was no doubt that symbols on coins were also to be considered as hieroglyphs.

What Poliziano writes in his *Miscellanea* thus reflects the lively interest in these issues within the Medicean Academy. On the basis of statements in Aelian, which reported the observations of the circle of Alexandrian scholars on the characteristics of animals, Poliziano says that harmony is symbolized by crows and not, as he had previously thought, by storks. Lorenzo de Medici had been made aware of this unusual passage of Aelian and he resolved the dispute by producing two gold coins of Faustina Augusta^{vi} on which the word "harmony" was inscribed along with images of crows. This information given by Poliziano is of particular importance for the study of humanistic hieroglyphics, since Horapollon not only gives the same hieroglyphic meaning for these birds, but also makes the same argument as Aelian.^{16,vii} From all this, the numismatics of the time got further confirmation that symbols on coins could rightly be equated with hieroglyphs. Poliziano, who along with Lorenzo must have had this insight in the late eighties – he wrote "nuper", [recently] in 1489 – did not know of the corresponding passage in Horapollon but it was certainly known to Marsilio, who, engaged at that time in preparing an edition of Plotinus, makes here an explicit reference to the author of the *Hieroglyphica*.^{viii} On the other hand, the Horapollon was known

^{vi} For a short time the Empress of Rome and wife of the Emperor Elegabalus in 221 CE.

^{vii} The two entries in Horapollon are on marriage which is not necessarily the same thing as harmony!

^{viii} Ficino's edition of Plotinus was published by Miscomini in May 1492.

¹⁶ See Poliziano cit., *Miscellaneorum liber centuria prima*, ch. LXVII, p. 281: "Cornicem videri apud veteris concordiae symbolum, non, ut omnes apud juvenalem existimant, ciconiam". The passage in Lorenzo reads: "Sed et in numismatis aureis duobus Faustinae Augustae, manifestam prorsus imagunculam (cornicis) nuper mihi Laurentius Medices ostendit cum titulo ipso concordiae". As for the extent that the extract from Horapollon coincides with that of Aelian, see Leemans cit., p. 10 and p. 156 and Horapollon cit, I.8 and II.40.

to Demetrios Chalcondylas who in 1486 had returned Filelfo's codex of the work to the Medicean Library.¹⁷

☞ *Pietro Crinito and the hieroglyphs*

The revitalizing effect on the study of hieroglyphics that the treatise of Plutarch had in Florence finds a clear example in the work of Crinito. Within the Platonic Academy, Crinito is without doubt one of the less intellectually able and yet, endowed only with a purely accommodative capacity, he gives us a clear overall picture of the issues that were being discussed at the time. Ugolino Verrino praises his poetic qualities, while Giraldis considers him merely a resounding gossip although first of all Crinito has undoubtedly the merit of having emphasized in his work *De Honesta Disciplina*, composed in the manner of Aulus Gellius, the audacity of the forgeries of Anniius. Here the author is principally concerned with details of the humanistic study of hieroglyphs, stressing particularly the importance of Plutarch as a source. From some hints of complacency that we can detect, we understand that Crinito had even written a special treatise *περὶ τῶν ἱερογλυφικῶν τῆς αἰγύπτου* [on the sacred inscriptions of Egypt] – which would “explain almost everything that is contained in the secret doctrines of the Egyptians”. After he had covered it once in a work entitled *Epistolica*, Crinito then collected his research on Egyptian philosophy in another text entitled *Theoremata*. Both of these works, however, suffered the same fate that had met the second part of the *Miscellanea* of Poliziano, of which very little seems to have been preserved except for some individual extracts. However, the notes to *De Honesta Disciplina* deserve careful consideration because these allow us an idea of the studies that the author had conducted on the hieroglyphs. It seems in fact that Crinito was one of the first to consider hieroglyphics as a field for independent research. Maybe it is thanks to this that Valeriano considered him one of the founders of the field.^{18,ix}

^{ix} For a modern edition see Pietro Crinito, *De honesta disciplina*, ed. Carlo Angeleri. Rome: Bocca, 1955.

¹⁷ See above, p. 43 nt. 24.

¹⁸ For Crinito see the entry in the *Biographie générale*. This incorrectly indicates 1500 as the date of first publication of *Honesta disciplina*, since it is dedicated to Bernardo Carafa and is dated “Nonis juniis 1504”. Crinito was born in 1465 and died around 1505. Bandini cit. cites some of his manuscript works conserved in Cod. I Plut. XXIV and in Cod. VIII, Plut. LXXXX. In *De Honesta disciplina*, bk. XXIV, ch. XII, Crinito criticises Anniius: “Annius Viterbensis, qui pleraque omnia impudentissime confinxit”; the treatise of the latter is discussed in bk. VIII ch. II where one reads about the contents that: “ea fere omnia (referimus) quae arcana ista Aegyptiorum sacra denotentur” – and in bk. V, ch. VIII. We can also recall the interesting pas-

A confusing array of passages of some importance drawn from the classics, from biographies, oral remarks and controversial issues are gathered together in *De honesta disciplina*, revealing frequent contradictions. Crinito makes the effort to provide stimulating material but not all the quotations he gives necessarily reflect his views nor do they correspond strictly to other interpretations which he refers to in other places. Thus, it becomes difficult to understand his personal views on individual hieroglyphic issues. However, trying to make an attempt in this direction is inevitable, even at the cost of assigning to Crinito views alien to him, because only in this way we can understand the attitude of the Florentine intellectuals to Egyptian antiquities.

Crinito also adopts the distinction which he had learned in the course of his Platonist studies with Marsilio Ficino, who supposed that the Egyptians employed two writing systems: one a symbolic form using images of plants and animals, the other alphabetical. Trying to contribute to an issue that had long been discussed as to the number of idioms involved, Crinito reports having found in an ancient manuscript a passage according to which, among the seven types of writing, Moses would have invented the first which was Hebrew and Isis would later have come up with Egyptian. Crinito here refers to the alphabet, since a tradition dating back to Isidore of Seville attributed to Isis the invention of characters corresponding to the Egyptian idiom. According to Diodorus such a character-based writing must have been the popular one, while hieroglyphs were customary amongst the priestly caste. The student of Poliziano defines the latter “notae sacerdotales (ut quidam vocant)” [sacred characters (as they are called)]. Although it is impossible to determine whether Crinito had considered this form of alphabetic writing or whether he had come across the passage of Plutarch first mentioned,¹⁹ it is certain that the author does not think to as-

sage of bk. VIII in which Crinito accurately reports, following the edition of Ermalao Barbaro of 1493, the remarks of Pomponius Mela, according to whom: “Aegypti homines vetustissimi sunt, trecentos enim et XXX reges ante Amasim et supra XIV milium annorum aetates certis annalibus referunt mandatumque litteris servant. Dum Aegypti sunt, quater suos cursus vertisse sidera”. In bk. IX, ch. XI, he covers the philosophy of Mercury on the basis of the Hermetic text *De sapientia* and names his own work *Theoremata*.

¹⁹ Regarding the opinion of Marsilio Ficino concerning an Egyptian alphabetical script see above p. 48 “Quoniam saepe in quaestionem venit, quot apud veteres idiomatum genera fuerint”. He quotes, “ex pervetusto codice”, the verses: “Moyses primus hebraicas exaravit literas . . . Isis arte non minore protulit Aegyptias”. For Isidore, the source from which these quotations derive, see above, p. 35. With regard to the opinion of Valeriano on this issue, see below.

sume that the basis of the priestly writing could have been alphabetical. Certainly, he writes “*litterae Aegyptiorum, quae hieroglyphica apellantur*”, [Egyptian letters which are called hieroglyphs] but only in the usual sense of the ancient tradition according to which hieroglyphs must have been an image-based script. The contradiction inherent in this definition is evident in Crinito, as it had appeared obvious to Alberti, and when he talks about hieroglyphs he prefers to use the term “symbol” or else “*notae hieroglyphicae*”.²⁰ It follows that Crinito does not distinguish between the symbolic and the hieroglyphic although, having to write a treatise dedicated to Egyptian hieroglyphs, his intention was collect the symbolic images that the classicists had expressly called hieroglyphics as well as the symbols which seemed able to explain the inscriptions on the obelisks among which were emphasized bees, beetles, cattle, vultures and plants.

Finally, it should be recalled that at the death of Lorenzo de Medici, [1492] it was actually his own brother-in-law Bernardo Rucellai, to whom Alberti had shown the Circus obelisk, who hosted the Platonic Academy in his garden. Meanwhile, Bernardo had become a great connoisseur of Roman antiquity and in his comments on Publius Victor,^x compiled after the expulsion of the Medici from Florence, had given very special importance to new discoveries of obelisks. He relates that, in the time of Biondo, there had been brought to light from a deep excavation some unknown fragments of the obelisks of the mausoleum.²¹

^x See ch. 3 nts. iv and v above.

²⁰ See Crinito cit., bk. VII, ch. VII (*De hieroglyphicis Aegyptiorum litteris ac de vulture et ape eorumque symbolo, tum de cruce etiam ipsa nobilis consideratio*), where it is written: “Nam in obeliscis regum Sesotidis atque Sennesornei, qui ex Aegypto in urbem devecti sunt, per ejusmodi symbola et hieroglyphicas notas rerum naturae interpretatio adnotata est. Ita enim Aegyptiorum philosophia creditur primo illustrata, quod ab eodem Plinio et aliis traditur. Inter alias vero effigies scarabeos, apes, fluvios(?), boves, vultures, aliaque id genus notare consueverunt. Porro ex ipsa effigie apis symbolum regis signabatur”, in bk. XVI, ch. II “De serpentum natura et ingenio in Aegyptia theologia et, qua ratione caput illis addatur, aliaque de accipitre memoranda: Mirum profecto est, quod ab Aegyptiis de natura et viribus quorundam animalium traditum est, quod ut magis illi posteris comprobarent, inter notas hieroglyphas sive sacerdotales (ut quidam vocant) retulerunt (sic)”. There follows then the citation from Eusebius, see above pp. 58 ff.

²¹ See Rucellai cit., col. 1003: “Obeliscos duos singulos XLII pedum in Mausoleo stetisse . . . , quorum fragmenta Numidici marmoris obruta rudibus etiamnum videre licet funditus persequentibus”. In col. 1018 there are some general remarks on hieroglyphs according to Pliny and Ammianus: “His obeliscis inscribi literis Aegyptiis auctorum nomina quandoque vero contineri inscriptam rerum naturae interpretationem ex disciplina Aegyptia affirmant. Etenim sculpturae illae et effigies, quae adhuc Romae Constantinopolique visuntur, Aegyptiae literae sunt, quas vetere fere hieroglyphas appellant”. For the dating of this comment, see Jordan cit., p. 303.

Perhaps it was Bernardo who encouraged Crinito to put together everything he knew about hieroglyphics.

From the words from Crinito given above, it seems that almost everything that authors might have read at the time was included in his comprehensive collection. Moreover, as early as *De honesta disciplina* the author had cited Pliny, Ammianus Marcellinus, Rufinus, Strabo, Iamblichus and Eusebius, explaining in detail the last two in relation to the symbol of the lotus flower and the hieroglyph of the snake with the head of a hawk. Crinito certainly knew the famous passages from Apuleius, Lucan, Tacitus and Diodorus mentioned above as well as the commentary of Marsilio on the works of Plato. Therefore we can assume that he knew Horapollon well, although in brief notes in the *De honesta disciplina* about the more detailed hieroglyphic studies that he had conducted, there are no explicit references to it nor are there traces of any hieroglyph which could be associated with this author.

Unlike Rucellai who reports the names of those who had erected the obelisks of Rome and of Constantinople, and even discusses questions of natural philosophy, Crinito neglects completely the problem of names even though this was supported by the translation of Ermapione, relying instead solely on what Pliny writes. The hieroglyphs were seen as books of Egyptian philosophy and this seemed to be confirmed by a reading of the Hermetic texts published by Marsilio, "The more that research makes known of the wisdom of this predecessor of Mercury" – he writes – "the more he displays both grandeur and the divine because he was the first to be able to grasp the truth, becoming master of the Greeks in all matters pertaining to God, the soul and the world". One can suppose therefore that Crinito also relied on other statements of Marsilio and came to see in the hieroglyphs a representation of the divine ideas. Crinito had in fact treated in depth in the *Theoremata* the pronouncement of Iamblichus that Pythagoras and Plato must have taken the greater part of their teaching from inscriptions on a column of Mercury, that is from hieroglyphs.

The idea that Egyptian thought had a strong influence on Greek philosophy precisely through hieroglyphics, is tempered by Crinito, who believed rather in the influence of Jewish tradition over his work, an influence which can be seen from the notes he includes relating to a dispute between Savonarola and Pico della Mirandola. He had had the opportunity to take part in this, expressing his preference for the

latter.²² Indeed he compared Pico to the Mercury of Lucian, who in turn in his discourses was able to persuade people of whatever he wished.

These were the years when the discussion of the relationship between ancient philosophy and Christianity was reopened and Savonarola threw himself against what he considered the bad example of Plato and Aristotle since, in his view, the former would lead to pride and the latter to atheism. Marsilio had a different opinion. He believed instead that not only the teaching of Mercury (whom the Egyptians honored as their greatest philosopher, priest and king), but also that the divine philosophy of Pythagoras corresponded largely to what Moses had taught and that Pythagoras had gone directly to the Jews of Egypt to learn their wisdom. With regard to Plato, he claimed that he was “germanus Moses, sed loquens Graeca” (the true brother of Moses, but speaking Greek).^{x1} This view of Pico evidently derived from the study of Philo, on the authority of whom Eusebius had already accused Plato of plagiarism from the Old Testament as well as an error in dating the Hermetic texts.

In the *Heptaplus*^{xii} Pico explains how he came to compare the full intellectual structure of Greek philosophy with the books of Moses, which seemed comparatively rather crude and popular. He argued that these passages in the Old Testament should be interpreted allegorically²³ and referred to the Hindu, Ethiopian and Egyptian tradition in which their philosophies were veiled behind the depiction of enigmatic images, as demonstrated by the sphinxes placed in front of temples. Actually he did not explicitly mention the priestly script of the Egyp-

^{x1} This reference to Pico's view of Plato also comes from the same passage of Crinito's *De Honesta Disciplina* cited above.

^{xii} For a modern discussion of the *Heptaplus* and Pico's new view of biblical hermeneutics see Crofton Black, *Pico's Heptaplus and biblical hermeneutics*, Brill, 2006.

²² Crinito cit., bk. III, ch. II (*Disputatio habita inter Hieronymum Savonarolam et Picum Mirandolam de philosophia veterum cum christiana academia et quid item vetustissimi de ipso deo senserint, id est Moses, Mercurius, Zoroastres et Pythagoras*). This is the text of Pico: “Pythagorae divina illa philosophia, quam magicen nuncuparunt, magna ex parte ad Mosis disciplinas pertinebat, ut qui ad Hebraeos quoque eorumque doctrinas in Aegyptum usque porrexerit”.

²³ *Joannis Pici Mirandulae Opera omnia* cit., p. 1: “In heptaplum de septiformi sex dierum geneseos enarratone”. The dedication to Lorenzo Medici says: “sunt . . . Salomonem in universa Aegyptiorum doctrina fuisse eruditissimum. Aegyptiis autem usi sunt praeceptoribus Graeci omnes, qui habiti diviniore, Pythagoras, Plato, Empedocles et Democritus . . . Quod si rudis in suis libris et popularis interim Moses potius quam aut philosophus aut theologus aut magnae sapientiae artifex apparet, revocemus in mentem, fuisse veterum sapientum clebre institutum, res divinas ut aut plane non scriberent aut scriberent dissimulanter. Hinc appellata mysteria . . . hoc ab Indis, hoc ab Aethiopibus observatum. Quod et sphinges illae pro templis insinuabant”.

tians, but his clear reference to Diodorus makes us think that he must have intended hieroglyphics in this passage. Pico must also have known Philo's *Life of Moses*, in which we read that the education of Moses had included, in addition to arithmetic, geometry and music, the Egyptian symbolic philosophy which was expressed at least partly in hieroglyphics and partly in the cult of animals.²⁴ So according to Pico, Moses would have written books in the form of hieroglyphic allegory.

If the invention of hieroglyphs was attributable to the Egyptians, then of necessity one had to recognize the clear superiority of their science, something which was obviously embarrassing for scholars of the age. While acknowledging Egyptian primacy in sorcery, in magic and in astrology, the form in which it was written in the Old Testament was always a different matter. In that regard assistance could be obtained from Josephus,^{xiii} who had had similar doubts when he identified a different tradition regarding the origin of the hieroglyphs namely on the two columns lying in Syria upon which the children of Seth had recorded their inventions so that they would be preserved from the general destruction prophesied by Adam. Even humanists like Sabellico, who had argued that the invention of writing was to be attributed to the Egyptians or to the Ethiopians, doubted that these inscriptions were composed of characters or even figures of animals that would have later been imitated by the Egyptians. In contrast, those who did not willingly accept the supremacy of Egyptian and Greek civilization over that of the chosen people, could see in the story of Josephus the proof of the existence of the hieroglyphs from the days when Egyptian priests did not yet exist.²⁵

^{xiii} Josephus. *Antiquities of the Jews*. bk. 1, ch. 2. 3.

²⁴ In the library of Lorenzo there is a manuscript Φίλωνος Βίος Μώσεως; see Miiller cit., p. 378. The passage of Philo on the culture of Moses, according to the translation of Zoega, *De origine* cit., p. 462, reads: "Numeros et geometriam et musicam Aegyptiorum eruditi tradiderunt, praeterea philosophiam symbolis involutam, quam in litteris sacris, quas appellant, ostentant et in animalium veneratione, quae deorum honoribus prosequantur". In this sense, it also expresses Clement cit., bk. I, ch. XXIII.

²⁵ In the work of Flavius Josephus, *De antiquitate Judaicarum*, Basel, 1524, translated by Rufinus, in fol. 7 there can be read: "disciplinam vero rerum coelestium et ornatum earum primitus invenerunt (filii Sethis). Et ne dilaberentur ab hominibus, quae ab eis inventa videbantur, aut, antequam ad noticiam venirent, deperirent, cum praedixisset et Adam exterminationem rerum omnium, unam ignis virtute, alteram vero aquarum vi ac multitudine fore venturam, duas facientes columnas aliam quidem ex lateribus, aliam vero ex lapidibus in ambabus, quae invenerant, conscripserunt, ut et si constructa lateribus exterminaretur ab imbribus, lapidea permanens praeberet hominibus scripta cognoscere, simul et quia lateralem aliam posuissent. Quae tamen lapidea

Even the supporters of the most rigid orthodoxy could not find anything to complain about the fact that the symbolic images in the text of the Bible, or at least those considered as such, were believed to be hieroglyphic. The use of the hieroglyphic writing of biblical symbols which had already been remarked upon, thanks to the *Physiologus*, ended up being legitimized even by the Church. It is very likely that Crinito had already extended his treatise to include biblical symbols. Obviously the rich language of images in the Psalms should also be given a hieroglyphic interpretation and this was something that later would actually be supported by Valeriano.

Even great secular poetry had a similar fate, offering in turn symbolic images in hieroglyphic script. Homer was an author who was especially suited to such treatment. Poliziano had praised him, calling him a master of a mode of painting, which was no more than mute poetry, a play on words that would later be taken up with enthusiasm in emblematic works.^{26,xiv}

For the Florentine humanists the ground was ready to welcome the ideas that had been clearly expressed by the Byzantine Tzetzes, a favorite of the Empress Irene, who had argued in εἰς τὴν Ὀμέρου Ἰλιάδα ἐξηγησις [exegesis of the Iliad of Homer] that Homer had been initiated into the science of hieroglyphics or Ethiopian letters as Diodorus put it. Homer would have written poetry in the same way as the Egyptian priests, who loved to expound their philosophical beliefs, not with characters, but by means of images of animals and similar symbols. To support these claims Tzetzes refers to Chaeremon whom I already mentioned above and for that purpose had provided a series of hieroglyphs as examples.

Crinito also enthusiastically studied this twelfth century

^{xiv} According to Plutarch, *Moralia: De Gloria Atheniensium*, iii, the origin of the phrase goes back to Simonides. Horace in the *Ars Poetica*, line 361 uses *ut picta poesis*. There were several emblem writers who used variations of the phrase in the titles to their books, for instance, Barthélemy Aneau, *Picta Poesis, ut pictura poesis erit*, Lyon: Bonhomme, 1552.

permanet hactenus in terra Syriae (according to a recent reading: *Seriadica*). For this suggestion see Sabellico, *Enneades sive Rapsodiae historiarum*, vol. I, Basileae 1560, fol. 2: "Duae ab his columnae diversa materia constitutae, . . . in quibus totum de consummatione mundi arcanum exscripsissent. Dubium literis, an animalium caeterarumque rerum figuris, quas postea sit Aegyptus imitata". The *Enneads* were published in 1504. Thus was born the view, characteristic of later centuries and that modern Egyptology has brought *ad absurdum*, that the hieroglyphs, as monuments of an age closer to the creation of the world, could have provided clarification for this last.

²⁶ Poliziano cit. In the *Praefatio in Homerum*, fol. 487: "quid si eundem (Homerum) picturae quoque magistrum autoremque vocemus, num opinor mentiamur? cum praesertim sapientis dictum feratur, poesisin esse loquentem picturam sicut e contrario pictura ipsa muta poesis vocatur". The wise man was Simonides. See Winckelmann cit., ch. I. Regarding the use of this assertion by Leonardo, see above p. 69.

scholar after he found in the library of Lorenzo a manuscript βιβλίον ὡραιότον [beautiful book] containing Tzetzes' comments on Homer. Crinito considered Chaeremon "vir doctrina multiplex totiusque antiquitatis curiosus", [A man of many interests and curious about all antiquity] or "vir (ut apparet) in omni antiquitate diligens" [a man, it seems, diligent in everything about antiquity], and, during a discussion about the different methods of fortune telling, he used the opportunity to cite this commentary on the Iliad. It is therefore not impossible to suppose that Crinito had already been using for his research the collection of hieroglyphic examples that Tzetzes had taken from Chaeremon. Samuel Birch, a famous modern Egyptologist, had found and published this information on hieroglyphics actually provided by an Egyptian priest, which until then had eluded the Egyptologists.^{xv} But Birch refrained from considering the precursors in the field which had hitherto been treated with total contempt. The origin of this belief was that Homer was a source for knowledge of hieroglyphics – an opinion that would be much strengthened by a profound study of Horapollo, who had the practice of adorning and illustrating his hieroglyphs with quotations drawn from the Iliad,^{27,xvi} a phenomenon which of course corresponded to the initial phase of Egyptology.

If some external causes had not abruptly obstructed its development, this widespread interest in the study of hieroglyphs

^{xv} See the citations in ch. I. nts. xxx and xxxi above.

^{xvi} The first Homeric extract is from Il. 19.313 and the second from Il. 1.206.

²⁷ Crinito's passage regarding Tzetzes can be found in *De Honesta disciplina*, bk. VI, ch. XI and bk. XIII, ch. X. In regard to the manuscript of Tzetzes in the Medicean Library, see Müller cit. p. 372, although the author is not named directly since it reads only ἐξηγησις τοῦ Ὁμήρου. For the hieroglyphic content of Tzetzes, see Birch cit., pp. 13 ff. The individual hieroglyphs are given on p. 19: "1. a woman playing the tympanum = joy; 2. a man holding his beard, his gaze turned towards the ground = grief; 3. an eye weeping = calamity; 4. both hands extended and empty = denial; 5., 6. a snake exiting or entering a hole = the rising or setting of a star; 7. the frog = resurrection; 8. the hawk = soul, sun and God; 9. the vulture = woman, mother, time and the sky; 10. a bee = a king; 11. the scarab = generation; beetle, to be born from yourself, male; 12. the bull = land; 13. the front of a lion = command and vigilance; 14. the tail of a lion = necessity; 15. a stag = year; 16. a palm = year; 17. a child = growth; 18. an old man = old; 19. the arch = rapidity". It is possible that these symbolic images had spread orally in the group of Florentine artists - the passages in Horapollo from Homer are at Il.5 (πολέμου στόμα) and Il.101: "When they wish to indicate an impudent and keen sighted man they use a frog; the frog has no blood except in the eyes and those that have blood-shot eyes are said to be impudent. So said the poet: 'Οἶνοβαρὲς, κυνὸς ὀμμάτων ἔχων κραδίην δ' ἐλάφοιο". See Leemans cit., p. 104 and 387. In connection with the humanist Fasanini and his understanding of the Homeric passages in the Horapollo, see below for the discussion of his discoveries on hieroglyphics.

would eventually have evolved into the emblematics of Florence. Beginning in 1494, the year when the Medici were driven into exile, access to their library became more difficult.^{xvii} Furthermore, the looting of their palace resulted in some initial damage to this cultural monument. Transferred from place to place, first to the Cloister of St. Marks, then again to the Medici palace, then finally in part at least into the hands of Salviati, the library was no longer the ideal location to conduct peaceful and undisturbed research.²⁸ Besides, its most illustrious patrons began to die: Pico and Poliziano in 1494, Marsilio in 1499 and then Crinito, still in the prime of life and soon after having delivered *De Honesta disciplina* to the press, in 1504. Thus within a decade the greatest scholars of hieroglyphics that had lived in Florence had passed away. Fra Urbano was fortunate that he lived in that Tuscan town at the time of the splendor of the Laurentian, inheriting from this experience the belief that one should study hieroglyphs scientifically. In fact, Urbano brought this legacy with him to Venice, just as Colonna had brought to the city of the lagoon the fruit of the research he had conducted in Rome and Padua. So it was that Venice assumed an increasingly prominent role in the study of hieroglyphics. At this point we should look back at the research that, at the turn of the fifteenth century, had developed in the lesser humanist centers.

☛ *Andrea Mantegna^{xviii} and the study of hieroglyphics in Mantua*

The itinerant life of the humanists, their correspondence and the printing of those classics which were most relevant for the study of hieroglyphics had helped to diffuse the chief results of the research in this promising field of study. And, as evidenced by their medallions, hieroglyphic representations of enigmas even enjoyed particular favor with the principal patrons of the day. Sometimes, just the direct participation of these patrons helped to stimulate the imagination of some court poet, little subject to the influence of scholars, which occasioned ventures into the most individual directions. Also strongly related to this interest in the secrets of Egyptian picture writing was the gradual use of these images by painters patronized at minor cultural centers, so that those princes who were lovers of art increasingly demanded that artists made use of hieroglyphics.

It is not surprising therefore that Andrea Mantegna included many hieroglyphs in his famous *Triumph of Caesar*^{xix} creat-

xvii The exile resulted from the action of the young Pierio Medici in ceding Florentine territories including the town of Pisa to the invading French armies under Charles VIII without the authority of the Florentine signoria.

xviii There are numerous modern biographies and editions of the works of Mantegna. There are also at least three *catalogues raisonnés* of which the best remains that of Paul Kristeller, *Andrea Mantegna*, Longmans Green, 1901.

xix The *Triumph of Caesar* consists of nine large paintings now in Hampton Court Palace in England. They are described as the only paintings in England which reveal the true size and ambition of the Italian Renaissance.

²⁸ See Müller cit. p. 3.

ed in Mantua in 1492 for the Marchese Francesco²⁹ especially if we suppose that the artist, endowed with a taste for antiquarian research and with his obvious pleasure in Latin quotations, Greek inscriptions and for the use of the characters from oriental scripts, wanted to show, for the benefit of scholars, an adequate knowledge of hieroglyphics. Looking back on how this interest of Mantegna evolved will allow us a clearer view of how these studies were propagated outside Rome and Florence and how they influenced other artists.

In 1459, the year in which Mantegna finished his youthful masterpiece in the Chapel of the Eremitani in Padua, the artist had yet to penetrate the mysteries of humanistic hieroglyphics. In the picture *St. James led to Martyrdom*³⁰ the side pilaster of a massive arch is decorated with a relief that seems to have been copied from an ancient model. If the young Andrea had been aware of the doctrines that had been established in Rome, you might think that he intended to depict hieroglyphs here because between a vase and a rudder, you can see a palm tree and a medallion that fills the entire central part of the frieze.^{xx} On the other hand, it is not entirely arbitrary to assume that these figures are linked by some relationship, because the vessel normally symbolizes life, the rudder a guide, the palm victory or even the life of a saint, and the circle eternity. This symbolism therefore must have been common knowledge to any humanist interested in hieroglyphics. Subsequently, a copyist must have believed that Mantegna had had the intention of depicting hieroglyphs, since he inserted in the circle the inscription, *La vita el fine*.^{31,xxi}

This relief reflects the admiration that Mantegna had for antiquities. So he had inscribed inside the circle “L. Vitruvius Cerdo”, [By a freedman of Vitruvius] thereby alluding to the so-called Arco dei Gavi, which was erected in Verona by a freedman or artisan of Vitruvius. This historical reminiscence is due to Felice Feliciano, a scholar from Verona who in 1463 had dedicated to the artist his collection of inscriptions.^{xxii} Hence it is clear that the study of hieroglyphics in Padua even

^{xx} Giehlow's reference to the frieze is a slip. There is a frieze on the arch but the images he refers to are on the pilaster he first describes.

^{xxi} “Life is ended”. A phrase taken from Petrarch's *Canzoniere* 23, v. 31. This inscription is in the copy described by Giehlow in nt. 31 below.

^{xxii} This dedication is contained in ms. 269 of the Biblioteca Capitolare of Verona. The enthusiasm for coin and gem collectors is expressed by Feliciano as follows: “not only to contemplate engraved gems, but when it is necessary, to recover them, to extract them, to excavate them from the entrails themselves, as one might say, of Mother-earth, to bring them to light”. Quoted in F. V. Laurens and P. Laurens, *L'âge de l'inscription*, Les Belles Lettres, 2010.

²⁹ See Henry Thode, *Mantegna*, Knackfuss' Künstler-Monographien 1897, p. 91.

³⁰ See *ibid.*, p. 14.

³¹ In respect of the copy that is held by Mr. Edouard André in Paris, see Thode *cit.*, p. 25. Paul Mantz, ‘Andrea Mantegna’, *Gazette des beaux-arts*, (1886), vol 1, p. 183, places this copy in relation to a story of the Anonymous of Morelli, who saw a similar picture at Michiel Contarini in Venice; on p. 181 he shows the cited inscription and the remarks about the arch of Verona. For Felice Feliciano, see *Inscriptiones urbis Romae latinae* vol. I, *cit.*, p. XLII.

in 1459 was just in a very preliminary stage, although the content of this picture makes one suppose that Mantegna had already expressed some curiosity at that time about the meaning of these puzzling images.

After he moved to Mantua in 1460 the artist was fully able to satisfy his curiosity for these things, because in this period Alberti was working in the city, intent on conducting and publicizing his own studies on hieroglyphs. Perhaps in particular Mantegna followed the stimulus of the great humanist by beginning to study the symbolism of gems and coins, especially in view of the fact that in 1472 Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga himself had asked for a meeting to discuss a study of cameos.³² The interests of the cardinal, from which was derived the hieroglyphs on the coin made for him by Sperandio,^{xxiii} makes one think that on this occasion hieroglyphics had been the subject of frequent discussion. When the *Triumph of Caesar* was commissioned from Mantegna, the artist must already have had a deep enough knowledge of this new discipline.

xxiii See above p. 76 for an analysis of this medal.

For a time it was considered that this work, the countless reproductions of which contributed to the spread of the fame of the artist, had been conceived in his early period. It is also suggested that a treatise of Giovanni Marcanova dedicated "to official offices, to the triumphs and to the institutions of war of the Romans", now no longer available, had persuaded Mantegna to devise a triumph at the end of the Paduan period, and that he was repeatedly confronted with the project until the Marchese Francesco, then eighteen, had decided to entrust the master with the creation of the picture, and this gave him the opportunity to give effect to his abundant imagination.³³ Much less dramatic was yet another path that led to the realization of the work, that is another humanist text, the *De re militari* of Valturio.³⁴ This was a text that not only played a significant role in the description of the triumphs of the Renaissance, but served as the source of the work of Mantegna and also gave him the opportunity to make use of his hieroglyphic studies.

³² See Thode cit., p 58.

³³ See Thode cit., pp. 90 and 92. In addition to the copper engravings made by Mantegna or his school, Andrea Andreani carved woodcuts and even Rubens copied these images in 1600. The copies in oil, in the collections of art of the Imperial Court, are considered models for the woodcuts of Andreani, see *Führer durch die Gemälde-Galerie. Alte Meister*, vol. I, Wien 1899, no. 72-80. In addition, a complete cycle of copies is in Schleissheim and Siena; see *Verzeichnis der Gemälde* Munich, 1885, no. 953-957. These copies are painted on copper, which leads one to suppose that they were executed later.

^{xxiv} The Roman Ovation was a lesser form of the Triumph awarded in the case of a victory over a less important antagonist or where little blood was spilled.

^{xxv} The 1534 Wechel edition has been digitized and can be viewed at http://books.google.com/books?id=m3Q8AAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

Valturio, the famous scholar at the court of the Malatesta of Rimini, had been able to give in his work an accurate reflection of the bellicose nature of Ghismondo di Pandolfo providing a broad picture of the art of war according to the accounts of the classics. Nor did he neglect to mention the inventions that his patron had made in the field of firearms and he also described in great detail the Triumph, understood at the time as the peak and culmination of military honors. In the twelfth and last of his books, the author addresses the nature and the differences that exist between the Triumph and the Ovation.^{xxiv} the various methods used by different peoples, in particular the Triumphs of the Romans, including the honors that were rendered to fallen leaders, and many other details. In short, it was composed in a manner that does not seem possible to imagine could better serve the needs of the Renaissance for a compendium of ancient military honors.^{xxv}

The text naturally found the best reception amongst those Italian despots who were mostly condottieri [mercenaries]. Even if it was not printed in Verona, a city very close to Mantua, the treatise must have been found its way as early as 1472 to the court of the Gonzaga. Whether it was the grandfather of Francesco, Louis II, who asked for an illustration of the chapter *Romanorum mores in triumphis* or whether it was Mantegna himself on his own initiative who prepared sketches is unknown. Both are possible. The fact is that both hypotheses seem plausible today, although it is very probable that the impetus to depict the *Triumph of Caesar* was due to his nephew, Louis [III] after the new Latin and vernacular editions of the *De re militari* had been printed in February 1483.

Francesco still had vivid memories of his youthful humanistic studies during which it must have been quite customary to discuss the role of the ideal prince.³⁴ As soon as he became prince at a young age, and in the absence of a Triumph for his glorification, it is understandable that he consented to Mantegna's request on August 26, 1484 that he should undertake a project which reflected a reading of a work like the *De Bello*

³⁴ The edition cited was published in Paris by Ch. Wechel in 1532. For Valturio see Voigt cit., I, p. 578.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 562 refers to the rhetorical exercises of the young princes in honor of Caesar. Guarino provided similar eulogies for Lionello d'Este. One notice from the court indicates that the triumph had been decreed to mark the victory in Gaul. Did this refer to an anti-French atmosphere at the court of Mantua? In any case, Battista of Mantovano later wrote some lines suggesting this. For the text of August 26 1484 see Thode, cit., p. 76.

Gallico^{xxvi} in accordance with the descriptions of Valturio.

The task of Mantegna did not therefore require the broad reference to all those sources which has hitherto been assumed. In fact, Valturio provides almost all the essential information based word for word on the work of Josephus, translated by Rufinus, on the Triumph of Vespasian and Titus, enriched by a broad erudition as well as observations from everyday life. The author omits only Appian's reports of the Triumph of Scipio, perhaps because he became aware of the translation of Decembrio only after completion of the manuscript.

If we leave aside some borrowing from this latter work,³⁶ which appeared a few months before that of Valturio and was later reissued in 1477, Mantegna appears to follow in detail the *De re militari*. In fact, Valturio reports on the extraordinary wealth of weapons and the shining armor stacked with pictorial effect and describes the colossal figures transported on wagons, the differences between the separate containers of booty, the young people who hold the sacrificial bowls and the oxen decorated with ribbons and crowns. These are all features that appear in the work of Mantegna and make it seem like the picture of a Triumph which is very close to reality.³⁷ Valturio even de-

^{xxvi} *Commentary on the Gallic War* by Julius Caesar, often the first classical text studied by students of Latin.

³⁶ On the translation of Appian by Decembrio, completed in 1453 for Pope Nicholas V, see Voigt cit., vol. II, p. 186. The actual reference in Appian, taken from Mantegna, is "lignae turres; captarum urbium simulacra; scripturae et imagines earum quas gessissent; thuris et odorum copia" and "horum (citharedorum) vir medio quispiam . . . gestus varios edens". However, Mantegna does not depict the lictors that preceded the emperor. The copper engraving by Mantegna (B. 11) - reproduced in Thode cit., p. 91 which until now has been interpreted as the triumph of the Senate, seems rather to represent the "scriptores" and the "ministri" who walk behind the wagon, followed by the army, divided into "thurmas". Although the sequence of these images of the Triumph matches in most instances, it has gaps and seems to have lost some parts even before the woodcuts of Andreani.

³⁷ See Valturio cit., fol. 357: "Crateras alii et phialas calicesque ornatissimos et ingentes gestabant. Ferebant simulachrorum sigilla deosque, quos illi habebant et magnitudine mirabilis et arte non defunctor facta . . . signa deinde aenea, marmoreaeque tabulae et colossi vehiculis portabantur . . . arma ornatissima et pulcherrima splendentia aere et ferro absterso atque ita disposito, ut casu maxime cecidisse viderentur: galeae, scuta, thoraces, ocreae, peltae, gesa, coryti, equorum, frena et anses stricti per haec jacentes et sarissae infixae ita, ut nec victorum quidem absque metu aspectus esset . . . Ferebantur in triumpho signa militaria, urbes et oppidorum simulachra . . . quin etiam equorum captorum greges et animalium diversa genera, elephantorum et leonum producebantur propriis ornamentis induta: ducebantur et boves post auratis cornibus, vittis ornati et sertis, ducebant eos adolescentes succincti ad immolandum et pueri aureas et argenteas pateras sacrificii gratia deferebant". Valturio emphasizes the spectators who watched the parade from windows, rooftops and from every location and this mass of spectators is also shown in Mantegna.

scribes with great precision the individual weapons of the trophies, so that Mantegna is limited to confirming the meaning of the words deduced from the technical description of the tenth book. As for the machines of war the cuts of the *De re militari* provided the artist with the most appropriate documentary sources^{xxvii} and the hieroglyphic inscriptions commemorating the imperishable military triumph certainly did not play a secondary role in the treatise.

It should be asked in relation to this last if Valturio had not been put on notice by Alberti. It has already been remarked that the noted humanist had completed his excursus on Egyptian symbolism before the translation of Diodorus was widely known and was completed in 1451 by Poggio. Between 1447 and 1450 the brilliant architect found himself in Rimini and was commissioned by Ghismondo to supervise the work on San Francesco, the famous church where Isotta had been buried.^{xxviii} It is possible that Alberti and Valturio had met on this occasion and that the former expounded to the scholar from Rimini the ideas that he was developing about hieroglyphs. One might suppose that the “*abditā philosophiae penetralia*” [hidden depths of philosophy], from which Ghismondo derived the allegories for decorating his magnificent palace, refer to these discussions initiated by Alberti on hieroglyphics.^{38,xxix} In any event, Valturio understood very well how hieroglyphs could be adapted for publicizing military glory when later he finally had before him the translation of Diodorus made by Poggio.

In the chapter devoted to columns, to obelisks, triumphal arches, pyramids, statues, shields, and the painted images which the ancients were accustomed to dedicate to their leaders (living or dead), Valturio accurately relates, faithfully following Poggio, the inscriptions on the columns or the obelisks of the Egyptian king Sesostris in memory of his victorious military campaign.³⁹ According to what he writes, it seems that just as a result of this reading of Diodorus, the author has carefully analyzed those stone “*julias*” in Rome since he observes, “*quemadmodum in urbe Roma inter diversas moles obeliscos videmus plures aliosque jacentes, alios erectos*” [just

xxvii The latter part of Book 10 of *De re militari* is certainly worth viewing for the depictions of extraordinary and possibly fanciful siege engines.

xxviii Isotta (1432-1474) called “the divine” was the second wife of Ghismondo Pandolfo Malatesta, ruler of Rimini, and regent for her son after Ghismondo’s death.

xxix The palace is depicted on a medal by Matteo de’ Pasti who also created Alberti’s own medal. See <http://www.flickr.com/photos/79846262@N04/7001310296/in/photo-stream/> (10/17/2012). De’ Pasti was one of Malatesta’s most loyal retainers. Among his many medallions was one for Isotta which is commented on by William S. Hecksher in ‘Bernini’s Elephant and Obelisk,’ *The Art Bulletin* 29, 3 (Sep. 1947) p. 173. He points out that Isotta was pregnant at the time and the elephant on the medal is reaching for a plant which could be a mandrake. Traditionally, the female elephant gave a piece of the mandrake to her husband to encourage him in his otherwise sluggish interest in sexual matters.

³⁸ See Valturio cit., fol. 383: “*imagines, quae . . . lineamentis alta te (Pandulpho) . . . ex abditis philosophiae penetralibus sumptis intuentes literarum peritos et a vulgo fere penitus alienos maxime possint allicere*”.

³⁹ See Valturio cit., fol. 372, bk. XII, ch. XI with the title, “*Superstitum non solum sed defunctorum ducum memoriae celebres tituli et de columnis, obeliscis, pyramidibus, arcubus, statuis, clypeis, tabulis cantarisque ad id exaedificatis*”.



Fig. 27 Detail from *The Triumph of Caesar* by Mantegna

as we see in the city of Rome among a mass of many different obelisks some fallen and some erect]. Because of their location, the author cites the wish of the victorious commanders to be raised above other mortals and he also recalls the custom of the Iberians who used to put on the tomb of a warrior as many obelisks as there were enemies whom he had killed. Certainly however Valturio did not think that the purpose of this information was such as to maintain to the present day the practice of decorating the monuments of those who had died in battle with an obelisk.

Mantegna derived from an almost continuous reading of this text the inspiration for his depiction of the hieroglyphic inscriptions in his *Triumph*. In fact, after describing how Sesostris had left in Thrace^{xxx} some columns “in queis Aegyptiis, quas sacras dicunt, literis scriptum exstat: Hanc provinciam subegit rex regum, princeps principum Sesoosis [sic]”, [there exists a text in those Egyptian letters which they say are sacred: Sesostris king of kings, prince of princes, conquered this province]. Valturio follows with: “erant et triumphales arcus suntque adhuc Romae suo loco, imprimis imperatoris Caesaris L. Septimii et imperatoris Caesaris M. Aurelii, Antonini Pii, rerum suarum insigni marmore et claro artificio, ut impressa docet inscriptio. Et arcus etiam triumpho insignis Constantini, quem incisae literae liberatorem urbis, fundatorem quietis indicant. Est et nobilis atque triumphalis Hierusalem, hunc titulum habens, Divo Vespasiano et Divo Tito filio S.P.Q.R. [there were even triumphal arches and there are still in Rome in this place, particularly for the emperor Caesar L. Septimius and the emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius, Antoninus Pius,

^{xxx} See ch. 2 nt. xxxviii above.

their insignia in marble carved with obvious skill as the inscription records. The arch also marked the triumph of Constantine, with incised letters commemorating the liberator of the city, the bringer of peace. Here is a noble and triumphant Jerusalem, with the following title, to the divine Vespasian and his son Titus, S.P.Q.R.]⁴⁰

Thanks to this reading therefore, Mantegna puts a triumphal arch as the centerpiece of the background of his procession, in which we see Caesar led on a tall chariot (see fig. 27) while through an association of ideas he perhaps sought to represent the letters of Sesostris in the inscription on the arch. Alberti must have confirmed in some way this placement from a literary standpoint. In fact, while the artist was engaged on the completion of this work, the printed edition of *De re Aedificatoria* was issued from the press in which there is discussion on the widespread use of hieroglyphics for Triumphal Arches.^{xxxii}

The choice and form of his hieroglyphs must have determined his stay in Rome, for which Mantegna interrupted his activities in Mantua between 1488 and 1490.⁴¹ In the Eternal City he must have come across a number of such signs and a group of scholars willing to interpret them, certainly including those who were in contact with Colonna. And this can be assumed also by the artist's attention to the frieze on the "ambone" of the church of San Lorenzo fuori le mura. In Rome, Mantegna might have had the opportunity to combine the drawings from the various parts of his survey with the series of hieroglyphs depicted on the lintel of his Triumphal Arch. It is possible also that this work could have been done later in Mantua and could have included the active participation of the Marchese. It is certain that Mantegna took with him to Mantua copies of this frieze from the church of San Lorenzo.

Although these details in the originals are now very damaged one can clearly recognize the features of the ambone frieze:^{xxxiii} the antique containers, the holy water sprinkler, the bowls, sacrificial knives and the half open casket with fire. This can be seen in a very detailed copy now kept in Vienna (see fig. 27) in which there are also depicted caps, axes and branches that are leaning on the containers, all typical features of the Roman frieze, (see figs. 18, 21 and 23) with which are mixed other symbols, such as shields and a caduceus.

All this shows that we are not just in the presence of a simple

^{xxxii} Alberti does not mention the hieroglyphic decoration of Triumphal Arches. His discussion of hieroglyphs is confined to the decoration of tombs given on pp. 126 ff. above. In fact he advises that the lintel above a Triumphal Arch should be plain.

^{xxxiii} For the ambone, see above ch. 4 nt. xxx.

⁴⁰ See *ibid.*, fol. 373.

⁴¹ See Thode *cit.*, pp. 78 and 89.

copy of an ancient model but rather that there was here an attempt to write with images. This aspiration to make a script with hieroglyphs which would be decipherable for all time was not fulfilled, but we can imagine, however, in analogy with the inscription on the Arch of Constantine as Valturio mentions, that it was intended to commemorate the achievements and merits of its subject. Thus for example, the caduceus alludes to the restoration of peace, while the sacrificial bowl represents the magnificence of Caesar, as Mantegna knew from his studies of medals.

There can be identified in Mantegna's work with greater certainty the enigmatic image, supported on the right of Caesar on a long pole, which serves as a pendant where there is written the motto "Veni, vidi, vici" [I came, I saw, I conquered]^{xxxiii} [see fig. 27].⁴² Consisting of a globe on which there is a cornucopia with a rudder on each side, it symbolizes the dominance of Caesar who guaranteed abundance in the world. This is a picture derived from coins which Colonna considered hieroglyphic.⁴³

xxxiii Caesar's famous words after invading Britain in 55 BCE.

We can not however say whether or not Mantegna attributed a deeper meaning to the images of the procession of animals, which sometimes also corresponded to symbols on coins. The open right hand depicted on a turreted wall seems to allude to the hieroglyph of liberality described by Diodorus,⁴⁴ even if one cannot exclude the possibility that it is a symbol indicating a captured castle, while another enigmatic hieroglyph identified in the picture is a single container on top of a pole which contains a hand in a fire. The picture also shows an inscription: "SPQR^{xxxiv} liberator urbis" [SPQR liberator of the city] on a table placed lower down. In the composition of his hieroglyphs Mantegna seems in this case to have followed the usual inspiration from Roman history, as we noted in the case of the hieroglyph of "custody" used by Colonna, and to represent a liberator of the city, he uses the symbol of a hand sacrificed in flames that recalls the legend of Mucius Scaevola.^{xxxv} A design dating from these years shows how the artist was particularly attracted to this heroic action.⁴⁵

xxxiv SPQR means of course Senatus Populus Que Romanus – the Senate and the People of Rome, the motto of the city.

xxxv Scaevola was a young Roman who was captured after his failed attempt to assassinate King Porsena who was besieging Rome. To show his bravery and his lack of concern for death, Scaevola thrust his hand into a fire whereupon Porsena released him as a tribute to his bravery. The first name of the Colonna mentioned by Giehlow in note 46 below was also Mutio which is presumably why he adopted this device.

⁴² See Thode cit., p. 90.

⁴³ See Caesar's coin, described above, p. 109, on which were depicted a rudder, a globe, a cornucopia and a cap.

⁴⁴ See above, p. 54.

⁴⁵ See Thode cit., p. 88 with an illustration of the symbol, and p. 106, where the date is given of the execution of the design of Muzio Scaevola preserved in Munich. Such a device was later used by a certain Mucius Colonna, see Giovio, *Dialogo dell'impresa militare et amorose*, Lyon 1574, p. 71. The motto of the device was "Fortia facere et pati Romanum est".

^{xxxvi} As Giehlow makes clear on p. 206 below, he is referring to St. Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria in the early fifth century.

The Egyptian and mystical features of this singular composition issue then from the juxtaposition of a part of the human body and a common object. It becomes natural therefore to think whether a similar hieroglyph consisting of a heart placed on a grill or one suspended in a container full of smoke has reference to Cyril,^{xxxvi} Plutarch and Horapollon.⁴⁶ The thorough study of the hieroglyphics of Mantegna makes one assume that these accounts were just what inspired the artist to such a singular composition.

In short, Mantegna, while working away from the major cultural centers, dedicated himself to this new field of research. This shows to what extent the study of hieroglyphs had by then become a fairly common pursuit even in the minor centers, indeed wherever there was an artist with distinct qualities of thought who came into contact with a patron with similar curiosity and interests.

☛ *The hieroglyphic studies of Francesco Colonna and the Italian humanists at the beginning of the Cinquecento*

If we consider the role of Francesco Colonna within the circle of humanists who were intent on breathing new life into Egyptian antiquities we cannot deny that the *Hypnerotomachia* responded to their far-reaching needs. In the same manner as Crinito, who strove to gather hieroglyphic symbols into a single treatise, the Venetian humanist aimed to popularize in the form of a novel a *summa* of all knowledge that then circulated in Rome and Padua. Even from a formal point of view there are so many rich and varied fields from which Colonna draws his examples that, from the early sixteenth century it made up a unique reference work for all scholars who wished to learn about the mysterious language of the hieroglyphs. At the beginning of the new century in fact the hope was still very much alive that they could be deciphered. Testimony of a wisdom handed down over the generations that went back to the origins of the world, the hieroglyphs were thought to be a source which might reveal the essence of all things, and as a document from ancient times, they gave reason to hope for a solution of ultimate uncertainties even in the field of genealogy. Not only that. As a means of expression open to the understanding of scholars of every age, they promised eternal life to all those

⁴⁶ See *De Iside et Osiride*, 10; a heart on the grill means “Caelum”; from Horapollon I.22, a heart symbol on a censer means “Aegyptus”. Later, in the context of knowledge of the hieroglyphics of Fra Urbano, see Cyril, where a heart above a censer equals “anger”.

eager for fame. The hieroglyphs of Colonna therefore seemed to be capable of meeting all these expectations and hopes in what appeared to be the “novelty” that Leonardo Crasso could not praise enough in the dedication to Guidobaldo.

In view of the complaints by Crasso at the time of the renewal of the ten year privilege that he had been granted for the publication of the work and the delay until 1545 before the printing of the second edition, one might get the idea that the *Hypnerotomachia* had not had any influence on subsequent literature but this does not take into account the success that it had in the study of hieroglyphics. Of course by December 1499 the triumphs of the artistic Renaissance had long crossed the Alps and Colonna could not therefore appear as an innovator, even if he alone in recent years had begun to develop a more intense study of hieroglyphics.

Crasso was disappointed with the commercial success of Colonna's work but this failure could be accounted for by purely external circumstances; in that regard there needs to be taken into account, to a greater extent than has been done so far, the fact that the *Hypnerotomachia* did not appear in Aldus' catalogue in 1503 or in 1513,^{xxxvii} and that the application for renewal of the privilege for the work was applied for not by the publisher, but by Crasso,⁴⁷ who edited the work on his own, gambling in this way for a wider distribution than Aldus could guarantee. Other events contributed to delay the release of the first edition. This can be deduced from this same petition of Crasso, which was registered on February 15, 1508 (i.e. in 1509 under the new style) in a record that is still preserved in Venice.

In this, giving reasons in the application for extending the printing privilege for another ten years, he expressed the hope of perhaps being able to recoup the expenditure that he had had to outlay, and said: “Et per il tempi et disturbi de guerra sono state, non habi potuto quelli (libri) mandar fuora et per altre urgente cause, de essi non sia reussito, immo quelli quasi tutti anchor habi, per li quali spece assai centenera da ducati”.

^{xxxvii} Aldus' 1503 catalogue consists of two sections containing “Libri Graeci” and “Libri Latini” with a third section “libri portatiles in formam enchiridia”. The *Hypnerotomachia* does not appear in the 1513 catalogue which is a close reprint of the 1503 catalogue. Both catalogues are transcribed in Renouard (1834) pp. 332-338. Personal communication from G. Scott Clemons.

⁴⁷ L. Dorez, ‘Etudes Aldines. II. Des origines et de la diffusion du “songe de Poliphile”’, *Revue des Bibliothèques*, VI (1896) p. 147 argues that 20 years earlier Poliphilo would have had great success since the Renaissance in the meantime had been come to an end in Italy. As for its contents, that the hieroglyphics would seem new to Crasso is demonstrated by the expression in the dedication: “quoddam et admirandum opus novum”. Here “new” cannot refer to recently completed. For the price of books of Aldus, see H. Omont, *Catalogue des livres Grecs et Latins imprimés par Aide Manuce à Venise (1498-1503-1513) reproduits en phototypie*, Paris 1892.

[and as a result of periods of war and the other disturbances that there have been recently, I have not been able to send these [books] abroad and, for other pertinent reasons in fact, I have almost all of them left in my hands at a cost of many hundreds of ducats].⁴⁸ From Aldus' letters one can also gather the difficulties experienced by editors and booksellers as a result of the war; already by 1506 the Venetian publishing house had had problems and then it ceased business altogether between April 1509 and the beginning of 1512.^{xxxviii} In fact, if after the League of Cambrai trade with Germany had been badly affected, after the embargo in the summer of 1513 for all intents and purpose it ceased altogether. Neither in 1513 nor in the following year could Aldus send books to the Frankfurt fair and even before this we know that the German book market had tried in vain to find his editions.⁴⁹ Certainly, it was always possible with special intermediaries to export a few books to Germany as we can gather from a communication from Pirckheimer to Reuchlin in the summer of 1512 about a Venetian book that was being sent to Nuremberg.⁵⁰ But Crasso was not a professional book dealer, and he must have experienced particular difficulties in distributing the work even if we cannot exclude the possibility that he still managed to sell some under the counter examples.⁵¹

Since the period immediately preceding his application had been somewhat calmer, it leads us to suppose that no matter

xxxviii The difficulties of the Venetian presses resulting from the war and the expansion of the European book trade are described in Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, Yale University Press, 2010, ch. 4, p. 65.

⁴⁸ See Popelin cit., p. CXCIV, where there is reproduced in full the request for an extension of the privilege. From the text it is clear that Crasso had prepared it long before it was accepted in the register. The document in question is in the Archivio dell Veneto Collegio, fol. 38 of the notarial register no. 24 for the years 1507-1511.

⁴⁹ See Schück cit., pp. 88 ff., and Didot cit, pp. 283 and 324. The movement of trade between the Emperor Maximilian and Venice during the war is described in H. Ulmann, *Kaiser Maximilian I*, vol. II, Stuttgart 1891, pp. 618 ff.

⁵⁰ See Ludwig Geiger, 'Joh. Reuchlins Briefwechsel', *Bibliothek de litterarischen Vereines in Stuttgart* vol. XXVI (Tübingen 1875), p. 183. The letter of Pirckheimer is dated December 1, 1512: "scripsi, vir clarissime, aestate elapsa, cum hinc Treverim abiturus essem, simulque tibi ostendi Demosthenis orationes una cum commentariis ex Venetiis allatas esse".

⁵¹ There even remained in Venice sellers of foreign books who bought texts for their own account. Thus in October 1498 Aldus mentioned in a letter to Conradus Celtes a Viennese bibliophile, who had taken to his own city "venalia non mea tamen, sed sua" [things for sale which were not mine but his own]. In a letter dated June 1501, Aldus wrote to Celtes and to Vincencius Longinus that Leonhard Alantsee, probably the same bibliophile from the earlier letter, had given him a poem by Celtes. For the diffusion of the *Hypnerotomachia* in Germany and France, see below the chapter on the German and French humanists. [This chapter was never completed by Giehlow; see p. 292.]

what he actually wrote, some books must have been sent abroad, so that the expression “quelli quasi tutti anchora habi” [I have almost all of them left in my hands] must be interpreted with some caution. Moreover, in such a petition the term “almost” takes on rather a vague meaning, since the writer had to deal in rather murky nuances to present his true situation. Thus Crasso, although, in the absence of appropriate contacts, had only managed to sell out the Colonna rather slowly over this period of armed conflict and had to wait in vain over a long period to recover his costs, the fact remains that the book did not have a wide circulation and he should not have been surprised by the reception of his avante-garde work within literary circles. If we are to evaluate in this way the influence of the *Hypnerotomachia* in the early sixteenth century, it would have to be supposed that there had been sold more copies than Crasso was willing to admit. The influence of the work of Colonna was in fact remarked on not only in Venice but also in more diverse localities and not just those that dealt with hieroglyphics.

That Aldus printed but did not distribute the work of Colonna, could have played in favor of its circulation. The house of Aldus was a big factor in the intellectual life of the time, but not every new press, and certainly not every work from his own press was pursued with great attention. But the work surely must have come to the attention of the members of the Aldine Academy, even if not everyone knew the name of the anonymous author. Certainly, it would have been recognized by those scholars who were in Venice in 1508 and allowed themselves with such self-denial to have dedications in the edition of Erasmus’ *Adagia*, namely Baptista Egnatius, Marcus Musurus, Joannes Lascaris and Fra Urbano. Probably it was the latter, whose interest in hieroglyphics was discussed widely among some scholars who would draw the attention of the illustrious Dutchman to the hieroglyphs of the *Hypnerotomachia*, especially for the entry for the so-called “festina lente”. On the other hand it was Aldus who showed Erasmus the coin of Titus with the representation of the dolphin and anchor, and, as described above, it was Aldus who chose these two symbols as the mark of his printing house.⁵² Manutius had in fact been given the silver coin by Pietro Bembo, the protégé of Lucrezia Borgia, in Ferrara before 1502 and perhaps the young humanist patrician had given this to Aldus after reading Colonna’s work.^{xxxix}

xxxix The coin of Titus does not incorporate the motto *Festina Lente* which was a favorite of the Emperor Augustus and goes back to Aristotle and Euripides. Colonna does however give the motto when interpreting the hieroglyphs on the bridge which include the anchor and the dolphin. (see p. 112ff. above). Aldus was obviously immensely proud of the coin since he showed it not only to Erasmus but also to Grolier as is evidenced by a note on Grolier’s copy of the *Adagia* which also has a drawing of the coin made by Aldus himself. See Dorez, *Etudes Aldines*, I, cit, p. 147. Dorez also discusses the likely date when the coin was given to Aldus by Bembo. Aldus also adopted the motif for his own medal. According to Ennius Vico both the motto and the image of the anchor and the Dolphin is found on a coin of Augustus himself; see Vico, cit., p. 56.

⁵² See Erasmus, *Adagiorum chiliades ac centuriae fere totidem* (Venetiis 1508), reproduced partially in Dorez, *Etudes Aldines* I cit., pp. 148 ff.

^{xl} *Il Cortegiano* was only published in 1528 by the Aldine Press a year before Castiglione died but the conversations in the book took place over just four days in 1507.

^{xli} "To the greatest and first man of the world. Your servant and slave Albert Dürer sends greetings to his magnificence Messer Willibald Pirckheimer. By my faith it is with great pleasure that I hear of your health and great honor and I marvel how it is possible that a man such as you [can stand] with so much wisdom against the soldiers, tyrants and bullies". Roger Fry in his edition of the letters *Records of Journeys to Venice and the Low Countries* by Albrecht Dürer Boston: The Merrymount Press, 1913 notes that the meaning of Tiraibuli is obscure but translates it as above. Tzentilam means Gentleman. Pirckheimer remained in Nürnberg after Dürer moved to Venice. At home in Nürnberg, Dürer had been viewed primarily as a craftsman but his fame in Italy had spread before him and in Venice his status was much improved and he could see himself there as a gentleman.

The diffusion of the *Hypnerotomachia* was also contributed to by the two poets who wrote the introductory verses for the work for Crasso, namely Giambattista Scitha and Andreas Marone.⁵³ These two had a degree of celebrity at the time being in close contact with lovers of "belles lettres". Scitha, originally from Feltre, was a famous scholar who knew Valeriano and loved to joke by changing his name to "Scienza" and Marone, esteemed mainly for his ability to improvise, was well-known in Ferrara where he helped to publicize the *Hypnerotomachia*.

Further traces of the dissemination of the work were found later by Bembo in Urbino,⁵⁴ in the in the etiquette and dress of the fashionable court of Guidobaldo da Montefeltro. In fact, the extract that Crasso dedicated to the Duke became one of the favorite readings of the court and the convoluted ways and sighs of Poliphilo were adopted by gentlemen to address their ladies, so that for these latter it seemed that a month lasted a millennium. Baldassare Castiglione, who until 1506 had dwelt in Urbino, puts into the mouth of Cesare Gonzaga some ironic statements about the willingness in the court in the conversation and correspondence with the ladies to use "the words of Poliphilo".^{xli} Similar usage was also common in the home town of Colonna. It appears that the strange mixture of language that characterizes the *Hypnerotomachia* did actually form part of the refinements of the circle of litterati. Even Dürer, in the summer of 1506, crammed his letters to Pirckheimer with an incomprehensible Latino-Venetian language and by giving it the mark of a "Tzentilam"^{55,xli} openly mocked the style of Colonna's work.

⁵³ See Popelin cit., p. CXCI. Information on Scitha can be found in A. Cambruzzi, *Storia di Feltre*, 4 vols., Feltre 1824-1877.

⁵⁴ In respect of the stay of Bembo in Ferrara see in particular Dorez *Etudes Aldine* I. cit, p. 157. For the passage of Castiglione see p. 247, where the study of Silvestro Marcello is cited, *La cronologia del Cortegiano di Baldesar Castiglione*, Pisa 1895. Marcello argues that the words were written about Poliphilo during the period indicated above. Dorez believed this may just be an afterthought. The *Hypnerotomachia* was dedicated to Guidobaldo, and the first printed copy had certainly been sent to him. In the *Cortegiano* (ed. M. Vittorino Cian), at the end of the third book, the passage continues as follows: "Refraining from some stupidities which often the very ignorant incur, and by different routes, I have known some who, when writing and speaking to women, always use Polifilian language, and are such in the subtleties of their rhetoric, that the women are wary of themselves and believe themselves ignorant and an hour seems like a thousand years before the discourse will end and they can depart".

⁵⁵ See Lange und Fuhse cit., p. 30, in particular the letter of August 16, 1506: "Grandissimo primo homo de mundo. Voster servitor et schiavo Albert Dürer disi salus suum magnifico Miser Willibaldo Pircamer. Mi fede el aldi vo-

The humanists who moved from Venice, Ferrara and Urbino to Rome, like Castiglione, who had been sent to the city in 1506 by Guidobaldo, like Giovanni Pierio Valeriano, nephew of Fra Urbano, who came in 1509, like Bembo, who first stayed there in the company of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici in 1510 and like Marone, who arrived in Rome around that time, helped spread along the banks of the Tiber knowledge of this unique and anonymous work in which hieroglyphs, together with more mundane issues, concealed a deep ethical and mystical content. Right here in Rome, between April 1508 and May 1509, Castiglione wrote his chapters deriding the use of which the text of Colonna was made in aristocratic circles. It is also likely that the decorations admired by Tory in the house on Monte Giordano to which I referred earlier^{xlii} were executed in this period.

^{xlii} See above, p. 118.

Just these inscriptions and their origins demonstrate the profound impression that the hieroglyphs of the *Hypnerotomachia* had made amongst the circle of Roman scholars. No wonder! The Roman humanists were right to show a great interest in the symbols on the obelisks, symbols which would remind them of the inadequacy of their own knowledge. In November 1502 Annio of Viterbo was still alive; he had probably introduced the study of these hieroglyphs to his compatriot, the future general of the Augustinians, Egidio Canisio, who later became a prominent figure in the study of Oriental languages. It was this Egidio da Viterbo who encouraged the young Pierio Valeriano, who in turn as the above citation shows had made copies of some of the hieroglyphs of the *Hypnerotomachia*. Pierio had recently arrived in Rome from Venice only to resist an enticing offer made by the imperial secretary Jakob Bannissis to join the Cancellaria, since he "de Maximiliano suo tam multa tam honorifice praedicabat" [had made known so many things with such respect about Maximilian]. We will see shortly, how it would be just this study of hieroglyphics that brought Valeriano close to Egidio.⁵⁶ In the same years the Neapolitan jurist Alessandro Alessandri, who was a friend of Pontano and member of the Accademia which had just been founded in Naples and who was working on his *Dies Geniales*, also settled

lentire cum grando pisir voster sanita e grondo hanor, e mi maraveio, como el possibile star uno homo cusi vu contra tanto sapientissimo Tiraibuli milites". Compare this with the examples cited above of the Poliphilo style. The parody is not bad. Thausing cit., vol. I, p. 378, provides a translation of this strange mixture of languages.

⁵⁶ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 123.

in Rome. Alessandri reflects a sense of wonder and amazement in his work that should have been a warning to all those who were faced with the hieroglyphs of the *Hypnerotomachia*.

Indeed, alongside the stories of demons, ghosts, spirits and interpretations of dreams, Alessandri also addresses the issues concerning the origin of and the various types of script that he notes, on the basis of information supplied in the classics, was the invention of the Egyptians and not the Assyrians. Starting with Diodorus, Alessandri distinguishes between the popular and the priestly script the latter of which must have referred to events of remote antiquity and he combined an admirable reading of Herodotus with personal observations. The popular script, widespread amongst the Egyptians, was, contrary to Greek, written from right to left, while the priestly script of Ethiopian origin was vertical, a fact that the author had discerned from a study of the obelisks. Alessandri obviously did not doubt that the hieroglyphs were an ideographic script. In addition to the examples reported by Diodorus, he cited the hare or the fox as symbols of "memory" from their pointed ears, whilst the eel was the symbol of envy. These he equated to the same examples in the letters of Filelfo in which, as we have seen, there are examples almost identical to the hieroglyphs.^{xliii} Perhaps Alessandri had already been able to examine these letters in Naples, where the memory of the humanist had been preserved thanks to the lively welcome that he had been accorded by Alfonso.⁵⁷

^{xliii} See above p. 47.

⁵⁷ Alessandri's work was published for the first time in 1522. Here I have used the Paris edition, *Alexandri ab Alexando, jurisperiti Neapolitani, Genialium libri sex* Parisiis 1550. The quotations are in bk. II, ch. XX: "Quare Aegypti, qui per notas et figuras sensu effingunt, si quem memorem significant, leporem aut vulpem auritis auribus, qui summi essent auditus et insignis memoriae, effingebant"; examples from Diodorus: "si invidum, anguillam, quae cum piscibus esset insociabilis, sculpebant" About the eel see above, p. 46, the letter from Filelfo to Scalamenti of October 1444 and, for the edition of the letters, see Voigt cit., vol. I p. 348, nt. 2; vol. II, p. 434. The first collection of letters was from Brescia in 1485 and circulated in seventeen separate editions. In 1502, an enlarged edition was published in Venice. The other passage on hieroglyphics in Alessandri cit, is in bk. II, ch. XXX, in which it is stated that the Brahmins wrote with colors on canvas and that the Babylonians used clay tablets. Then follow a colorful grouping of different kinds of script. Egyptians we read: «proditumque memoriae est, Aegyptios literas habuisse usitatissimas, quas singuli discunt, quas vero dicunt sacras, interiores et reconditas soli sacerdotes norunt a parentibus traditas, qui etiam ex omni antiquitate rerum gestarum sensa effinxere. Atque Aethiopes perplexo scripturae genere usos, ut non ex lateribus digestis ordinibus (ut mos communis habet), sed a summo ad imum literarum ductus exararent, quod taepocon Graeci appellant, qui cum septem characteres habeant, illorum singuli quatuor recipiunt significatas. Atque Aegyptios a dextra in sinistram contra Graecorum morem ductus disponere». Alessandri

On the basis of this research one could criticize the left-to-right hieroglyphic script adopted by Colonna, which was similar to Greek but contradicted what Herodotus had written. One cannot know whether such an objection was raised by Alessandri, since he refers only to classical authors on this point. Like other contemporaries, the humanist, who had decorated his home with pictures of Poliphilo, does not seem to have noticed this passage of Herodotus, seeing that Tory does not mention any anomaly in this line of the text.

Roman scholars were amazed probably not so much by the text of Colonna that contradicted a classical author, but on the lack of any symbols from obelisks that the author had deciphered. The few hieroglyphs featured from the Poliphilo were in fact minimal compared to these Egyptian monuments which were more and more numerous in the early decades of the sixteenth century and which had been brought to light accidentally or through careful excavation. In fact there soon arose a general sense that the author of the *Hypnerotomachia* had an inadequate understanding of the script.

At the beginning of the pontificate of Julius II there were finally found the remains of the much discussed gnomon-obelisk.^{xliv} Digging a well in a little garden near San Lorenzo in Lucina, a barber discovered the base of the monolith that Pliny had described in detail and on which can be read the words “soli donum dedit” [he gave a gift to the sun]. Only partially excavated, it was regarded as the greatest of all the obelisks. One chronicler relates vividly how scholars had asked the pope to continue the excavations in order to recover the whole of this ancient wonder. But Julius, “in bellis tunc, ut semper implicitissimus”, [as always, completely involved in war-like pursuits]” as was said with bitterness, would not agree to complete the excavations and the barber was forced to replace the obelisk.⁵⁸ However, Rome did not forget the work. The carnival procession that took place on February 20, 1513,^{xlv} that is a few

lived from 1461 to 1523. On him see the entry in the *Biographie générale* and Burckhardt, *Die Cultur* cit., vol. II, p. 357.

⁵⁸ See Bandinius, *De obelisco Caesaris Auguste e Campi Martii rudibus nuper erecto* 1750, p. 98, where he provides a note of a contemporary, Laelius Podager, concerning the epigrams of Jacobus Mazzocato. In his work on the obelisks, Zoega, *De origine* cit., p. 635, records this marginal note, proposing that it is from the manuscript Ms. Vatic. no. 1508. The passage reads: “«Julio principi ut bellis tunc, ut semper implicitissimo, ut obeliscum hunc iterum erigi et in pristinam formam una etiam cum gnomone restituì faceret, suasere quidam permulti, persuasit autem nemo. Ideo tantum antiquitatis miraculum a tonsore illo iterum sepultum est”. According to Bandini this occurred in 1509.

^{xliv} See the description of the gnomon and its rediscovery in 1976 in Nicola Severino, *Storia dell'obelisco e dell'orologio solare di Augusto in Campo Marzio*. Roccasecca, 1997 and for a summary, see Curran, 2007, cit., p. 170.

^{xlv} Julius died on the 21st February 1513. For the carnival of Julius II, see J. Kłaczko, *Rome and the Renaissance: the Pontificate of Julius II*, trans. J. Dennie, New York: Putnam, 1903, pp. 360-66.

days before the death of the pontiff, probably alluded to this episode, since an obelisk was paraded that bore the inscription: "Julius secondo Italiae liberatori et scismaticis expulsori" [to Julius II who liberated Italy and banished the schismatics]. Since peace had finally been secured, perhaps this was intended to remind the warlike pontiff of his duties towards science? But it is also possible that this was an attempt, following the *Hypnerotomachia*, to dedicate an obelisk to the new Caesar. What is certain is that this incident reflected the extent to which the formal Egyptian world had achieved popularity.⁵⁹

Occasional discoveries of Egyptian antiquities had certainly been made several times in the foundations of the *Iseum* during those years. We know that when, in the twenties of the sixteenth century, Fra Giocondo and Peruzzi sifted more methodically this soil so rich in discoveries, they unearthed a multitude of hieroglyphic inscriptions. It was then if not even earlier that there was found the famous *Mensa isiaca*^{xlvi} later known as the *tabula Bembina* after the name of its buyer. This metallic table, on which were depicted in gold and silver inlay composite figures of animals and fantastic creatures, griffins, basilisks and the head of an ibis on the foot of a hippopotamus, was a new conundrum for the hard-pressed humanists. Over the next century it gave no rest to the curiosity of scholars since it was anticipated that they could obtain from this work, as from the obelisks, clarification of all the history of ancient Egypt and a glimpse of its secret wisdom. The fact is that what was believed to have an Egyptian provenance ended with a flourishing and extensive bibliography, so that all the monstrosities contrived by Egyptology before Champollion were believed to be concealed also in the Table of the *Iseum*. There were scholars who claimed to have seen in these images the secrets of Christian mysticism and even guidelines for using the magnetic needle! After such claims scholars often resorted to the hieroglyphs of the *Hypnerotomachia* in the hope of getting help in interpreting those strange animal figures. But soon they were discouraged, giv-

^{xlvi} Good images of the *Mensa Isiaca* are to be found in the *Thesaurus Hieroglyphicorum* of I. G. Herwart von Hohenburg. Published in 1610 this contains detailed images of the *Mensa* and of many of the obelisks and other Egyptian artifacts. The *Mensa* is also helpfully depicted in large scale detail and in reverse presumably in case the hieroglyphs on the table were to be read from right to left. It was obviously intended to have a commentary but this was never completed. For the Table see also Ernesto Scamuzzi, *La Mensa Isiaca del Regio Museo di Antichità di Torino*, Rome: Bardi-Editore, 1939.

⁵⁹ See Eugène Muntz, *Histoire de l'Art pendant la Renaissance*, vol. II, Paris 1895, p. 18 and A. Ademollo, *Il Carnevale di Roma al tempo di Alessandro IV, Giulio II e Leone X*, Florence 1891, p. 39 and p. 57. This is a description in verse of the obelisks: "I carpentari succedono a queste, / e dapoi loro un Obelisco viene / sopra un carro con lettere conteste / latine, greche, ebraiche, sirene (sic), / caldee ancora e par che dich' in queste, / se 'l tenor lor mi porse intender bene / Julio secondo Italiae liberatori. Soggiunto a quello; ac scismatici (sic) expulsori".

en the small number of explanations provided by the text of Colonna.^{60,xlvii}

The growing gap between the hieroglyphs interpreted in the *Hypnerotomachia* and the mass of the authentic ones, which

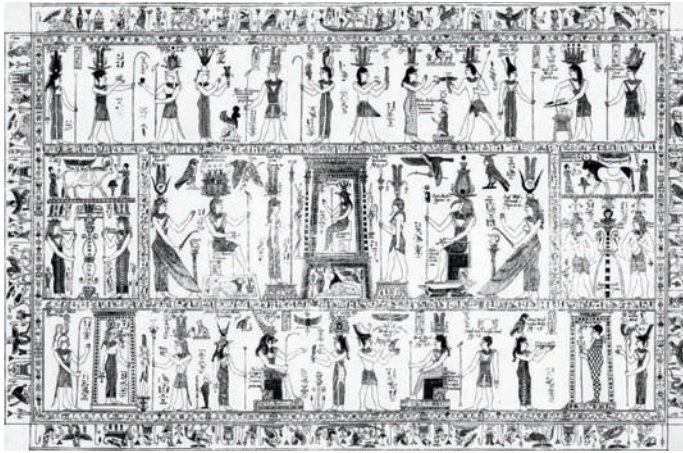


Fig. 28 The *Mensa Isiaca* (*Tabula Bembina*) from the *Thesaurus Hieroglyphicorum* of Herwath von Hohenburg

thanks to continued discoveries were obvious to everybody, eventually became the main reason for deprecating the work of Colonna, who was believed to have used sources for hieroglyphs that were not previously considered or that remained unknown. What was not understood was that Colonna had wisely avoided the interpretation of the inscriptions that he had not invented, nor was the arbitrariness of some of his own hieroglyphs actually appreciated. The facility with which the

xlvii Vico (see nt. 60) actually published in 1559 an edition of plates of the *Tabula*. There were further editions of the *Vetustissimae tabulae* of Pignorius in 1608 and 1669 which contained illustrations of the table engraved by De Bry. Pignorius came to the conclusion, confirmed by Champollion, that the “hieroglyphs” on the table were decorative and fanciful and did not have any meaning although he attempted to translate individual hieroglyphs on the Table by reference to Horapollo. See for instance Pignorius cit. 1608 ed. fols. 14^v, 23^f and 31^r which refer to the stork, the baboon and the beetle respectively. See also Boas cit. p. 55.

⁶⁰ For the *Iseum* excavations, see the bibliography on ch. 3 nt. 1. As for the *Tabula Bembina*, now kept in the Egyptian Museum in Turin, see Zoega, *De origine* cit., p. 845, who believes it to be an Egyptian work, although it has long been considered of Roman origin. Enea Vico made a copper engraving in 1559. Pignorius (1571-1631) made it the subject of an exhaustive commentary published in Venice in 1605 under the title *Vetustissimae tabulae aeneae sacris Aegyptiorum simulachris coelatae accurata explicatio*. Kircher read in it secrets of mystical Christianity; for other interpretations see the entry *Tavola Iliaca* in Zedler's *Lexikon*. According to the latter the Table must have been kept in the Pontifical treasury until the Sack of Rome and was then bought by Bembo from a farrier. The truth of this remark cannot be confirmed although Valeriano in his preface to the commentary dedicated to Fra Urbano (*Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 233) indicates that: “tabulae cujusdam ob antiquitatem admirabilis exemplum ad me Roma misit Bembo meus”. The date of the dispatch of the *exemplum* throws light on Fra Urbano's study of hieroglyphics as is discussed below. Valeriano also remarks on the singular illustrations of the Table, see *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 105^{r/v}, 124^v, and mentions it several times, see for example, the dedication fol. *3.

author had been able to mix his fancy hieroglyphs with those taken from Herodotus, Diodorus, Ammianus, Macrobius, Eusebius, etc., made scholars assume that when they came across hieroglyphs that were not present in these latter sources, these were examples drawn from classical authors that only Colonna had been able to consult. Erasmus could therefore hypothesize that the anonymous author of the *Hypnerotomachia* had made extracts from the books of Chaeremon that, according to the Suda, were unfortunately lost.

☞ *Aldus Manutius and the Editio Princeps of the Hieroglyphica of Horapollon*

So thus it was that the interest of scholars changed and passed from the *Hypnerotomachia* to a careful consideration of the work of Horapollon. Until then only a privileged few had an adequate understanding of the *Hieroglyphica*, so it was hoped that this edition of the treasures of Egyptian priestly wisdom would give the key to deciphering these figured enigmas. Some information about the content of the work had circulated but only resulted in the creation of an aura of great mystery around the Horapollon. Its eccentric placement within the somewhat magical penumbra in the background of the study of hieroglyphics that the work helped to develop and the fact that the text had only been consulted by renowned philosophers meant that the Horapollon exerted a rather quiet but not limited influence. Not only that. To compete with those who could solve the enigmas of the *Hieroglyphica*, other scholars vied with each other in making the most amazing and acute interpretations of the work.

However, at the close of the fifteenth century, the *Hieroglyphica* constituted for the majority of scholars a kind of text from the seven seals.^{xlvi} Study of the book was made difficult by a lack of knowledge of Greek and the poor state of preservation of the text. To this we must add the relative rarity of copies and, not least, jealousy among scholars.^{xlvii} The example of Colonna shows the extent that these obstacles might hinder a student. Despite having lived in Venice for years, that is close to where the copy of the Horapollon was made for Cardinal Bessarion,⁶¹ Colonna demonstrated little or no knowledge of the *Hieroglyphica*. Since he read Greek, once he had been confronted with the text, the Venetian scholar could hardly have limited himself to making use only of the hieroglyphs of eter-

^{xlvi} A reference to *Revelations* 5-8 which describes the book of the vision of John as secured by seven seals.

^{xlvii} See ch. 2 above nts. 4, 24, and 41 for Giehl's references to the manuscripts of the *Hieroglyphica*.

⁶¹ See above, p. 33 for the copy of Bessarion's Horapollon; for the fate of books in Venice, see the bibliography in Burckhardt, *Die Culture* cit., vol. 1, p. 206, and Voigt cit., vol. II, p. 132.

nity and death – “tolerance” and “labor”⁶² so that we cannot even exclude the possibility that these latter were derived from other sources! Colonna’s inventions may have come from an oral tradition or from letters – just consider the depiction of the eel, a symbol of envy, cited by Horapollo and made available thanks to a letter from Filelfo – but not from reading the *Hieroglyphica*. The ignorance of Colonna can perhaps be explained by the fact that, after they had been received, the Republic of Venice had left the books packed up in the library of the cardinal. Even in 1491 access to this wealth of books had been prevented for even such a personage as Angelo Poliziano who arrived in Venice as an agent of Lorenzo de Medici to do some research. In a letter dated June 21 Poliziano was reduced to expressing the hope of being able to see the library, so it can be inferred that up to that moment he had not yet succeeded.⁶³

Now Colonna, although he could not quench his thirst for knowledge by reading the *Hieroglyphica* at least had the satisfaction of drawing attention to hieroglyphics and of promoting their study. All this was encouraged by changing circumstances. In fact, during that time the main obstacle was removed which had hitherto hindered the editing of the work of Horapollo, namely the lack of dissemination and knowledge in Italy of Greek. Its teaching now became customary for the young, scholars composed poems and wrote letters in Greek, and even the statutes of the Aldine Academy, written in Greek, prohibited members from using another language on penalty of the payment of a fine.⁶⁴ It was at this point that the wish to know the content of the *Hieroglyphica* which was said to yield promising rewards, even from the commercial point of view, assured the printing of a Greek edition of the text. The publication of the work was thus only a matter of time, especially since it was the house of Aldus that had printed the *Hypnerotomachia*.

In view of the obscurity that surrounds the relationship between the two, we cannot confirm, directly or indirectly, that it was Colonna who convinced Aldus to print the *Hieroglyphica*. Situated within the environment which characterized Venetian commerce, scholars seemed to have been left on their own. The restraint of Colonna and the fact that the publication of the *Hypnerotomachia* was due only to the intervention of

¹ The New Academy or Aldine Academy was supposedly founded c 1502 by Aldus Manutius but see “The new academy” of Aldus Manutius: a Renaissance dream by M. J. C. Lowry, at <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:1m2110&datastreamId=POST-PEER-REVIEW-PUBLISHERS-DOCUMENT.PDF> (10/17/2012) which suggests that the Aldine Academy never had a formal existence and such activities as there were were discontinued after 1504.

⁶² For the hieroglyphs on “Labor et tolerantia” see above, pp. 123 ff.

⁶³ See Müller cit., p. 356.

⁶⁴ See Burckhardt, *Die Culture* cit., vol. I, p. 213. See the statutes of the Aldine Academy, published by Firmin Didot cit. Appendix.

Crasso, makes one think however that our author must have lead a quiet and secluded life away from the Aldine Academy. Aldus was not only a skilled printer, but also a dynamic editor and a scholar so eager to increase his knowledge that after reading the *Poliphilo* he must have felt the need to have at hand the text of Horapollo. Thus he succeeded in persuading the Signoria to put at his disposal the treasures of Bessarion not only for purposes of study but also for editorial work. Being particularly well-informed about the content of this library Aldus had been aware since the publication of the *Hypnerotomachia* that Cardinal Bessarion had a copy of the manuscript of the Horapollo and perhaps as a result he came up with the idea of publishing the text. What is certain is that Aldus must have gathered from Colonna the choice of the hieroglyph from the coin of Titus as a mark for his house. Anyway a few more years were to pass before Aldus printed the Horapollo.

The delay was due both to the condition of the manuscript and to the particular obscurity of the text.⁶⁵ In order to have an acceptable and legible version it was necessary to compare Bessarion's copy with other manuscripts and have access to a scholar who, in addition to having a near perfect knowledge of Greek, was particularly expert in the study of this language. Although the manuscripts of Horapollo were rare, Aldus, thanks to his many contacts, must have been able to get at least a list of some of the variants. But destiny decreed that for two years, the Venetian publisher would have to do without the man who had all the qualifications to publish the *Hieroglyphica*, namely Fra Urbano, who in 1497 had had Manutius print the first Greek grammar in the Latin language and what's more who for his whole life had been involved with hieroglyphs with results that are only today appreciated. In fact, because of his language skills, Fra Urbano had been sent in 1500 with the embassy of Doge Andrea Gritti to Constantinople from which he was only to return two years later.⁶⁶ Aldus could not start

⁶⁵ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., pp. 233 ff. where the judgment of Ranerius on the state of the manuscripts of Horapollo is reported: "sed codicem (Hori Aegyptii), quamvis ab Aldus nostro publicatum, plurimis locis mutilum et imperfectum invenimus non utique Aldi viri diligentissimi negligentia, sed exemplarium vitio, quae rarissima reperiuntur, atque ea in damno omnia". Although these words must have been addressed to Fra Urbano and there is no mention of his contribution, this does not make them any less true.

⁶⁶ See Ticozzi cit., pp. 33 and 55. According to Ticozzi, Fra Urbano was born "about 1443", and turned sixty on this journey. He died in 1524; see also above, ch. 4 nt. 9.

printing Horapollon without the advice and knowledge of Fra Urbano, so that the first version of the *Hieroglyphica* could not have been finished before 1503.

Finally, two years later, in October 1505, the *editio princeps* appeared. Characteristically, the *Hieroglyphica* was published together with the fables of Aesop and Gabrius,^{li} with the proverbs and mythological treatises of Phurnutus (or Cornutus) and Palaephatus, as well as with other miscellaneous texts. The text of the Horapollon was thus part of a weighty folio volume that for the price of one ducat, promised to give scholars an exposition of the riddles of the Egyptian script.⁶⁷

^{li} Now usually called Babrius.

Up to now it seems that the influence of the *Hypnerotomachia* on the *Hieroglyphica* has been underestimated. And yet the connection explains the effect which, after its appearance, the work of Colonna had on his contemporaries. We must not lose sight of this point if the lines of the humanistic study of hieroglyphics are to be retraced. Colonna was in fact largely repaid for having given the initial impetus for Horapollon's publication because, wherever the work of this latter reached, attention inevitably ended up falling on Poliphilo. In short, the two works complemented each other and publicized each other reciprocally and where one was being studied, the other was always close by.

This reciprocity was further helped by the fact that in the *Adagia*, whose innumerable editions had a wide circulation amongst scholars, Erasmus puts the credits for his sources for hieroglyphics next to each other.⁶⁸ While not specifically citing the work of Colonna, he does provide a starting point for identification when in respect of the hieroglyphic content he explains the phrase ἀεὶ σπεῦδε βραδέως [always hurry slowly] as derived from Chaeremon, that is from the text that was thought must have been the source of the *Hypnerotomachia*. Indeed, this name cited by Erasmus, who persuaded his contemporaries to read the *Hypnerotomachia*, was sufficient to introduce to them the hieroglyphs in the work of Colonna. Considering then that scholars were accustomed to resort to the classics ev-

⁶⁷ The title is reproduced in Leemans cit., p. XXIX; for the price see above [the reference by Giehlow gives no further information on the price.].

⁶⁸ Erasmus cit., fol. 112: "Etiam Horus Aegyptius, cujus extant duo super huiusmodi symbolis libri, serpentis sculptura non annum, sed aevum representari tradit, annum autem tum Isidis, tum Phoenicis imagine. Scripsit his de rebus et Chaeremon apud Graecos, testimonio Suidae, cujus ex libris excerpta suspicor ea, quae non nuper conspeximus huius generis monumenta. In quibus etiam haec inerat pictura". See above ch. 4 nt. 49.

ery time that they could, they ended up citing Chaeremon instead of the *Hypnerotomachia*, so that whenever, after the publication of the *Adagia*, this ancient sacred scribe is cited next to the text of Horapollon, one can always substitute Colonna's name for his. Thus began the joint triumphal march of Horus-Apollo and Chaeremon-Colonna, which, from this moment on, would dominate the study of hieroglyphs in the Renaissance. And what the humanists could not do individually, they achieved quickly with their combined effort through the development and the general diffusion of the emblematic genre.

^{lii} For a brief bibliography of Urbano see ch. 4 nt. 9.

☞ *Fra Urbano^{lii} and the study of hieroglyphs in Venice*

All the advantages that the *Hypnerotomachia* had enjoyed from being printed in the house of Aldus were repeated to a greater extent in the case of the Aldine edition of the *Hieroglyphica* and to this was added the popularity enjoyed by the other works printed in this edition. Thus the Latin translation of Aesop, accompanied by the Greek text, was greeted with general enthusiasm, while the treatises of Cornutus and of Palaephatus were an added bonus for students of antiquity. The numerous editions of Horapollon that followed, along with the repeated references in the literature of the time and in the texts that were included in this edition, suggests that in these years the Venetian edition of the *Hieroglyphica* achieved some notoriety. Yet, even more than these fortunate coincidences, the fact was that the text of the work itself, in the revision by the Aldine Academy, promoted the rapid circulation of the Greek edition of the Horapollon amongst all the more dedicated students. And this also helps us understand the central role of Venice in the field of Egyptological studies of the period.

Moreover, even before the work of Horapollon was printed, Sabellico – who like Aldus had moved from Rome to the Adriatic – had described in his *Enneads* published in 1504 the attitudes of local scholars to the hieroglyphs. Although the author repeats several times the traditional reference to the dual system of Egyptian writing and the use of the priestly pictographic script just as Diodorus had attested, he clearly tends to stand at odds with this and is more aligned with the source that the medieval tradition follows going back to Lucan, according to which writing was in fact invented by the Phoenicians. To substantiate this suggestion Sabellico recalls ancient Roman hieroglyphic monuments which he underlines, “ut videre est” [as it is] and for each figure of which there corresponded some hidden significance, even though basically he

seems uncertain whether to trust this interpretation or to see the script as an imitation of characters engraved at an unknown time on the Syrian columns.⁶⁹

Despite being more than six years older than Fra Urbano, Sabellico declared on one occasion that he had been a student of the former in the study of Greek.⁷⁰ We can assume that Sabellico intended by this to pay homage to the intellect of Fra Urbano Valeriano Bolzani – whose surname was delle Fosse – in the complex field of hieroglyphics, a field that this last mastered better than any of his contemporaries. We can also reasonably assume not only that the remarks of Sabellico about hieroglyphics basically reflected the ideas of his Greek teacher but also that Fra Urbano ended by decisively influencing other humanists who were then in Venice, for instance his student, the erudite Danieli Rinieri, the scholarly Venetian senator and Procurator of St. Marks, his nephew Valeriano, individuals of independent origin such as Johannes Lascaris, and above all Erasmus of Rotterdam. Although this authority of Fra Urbano is amply proven, it is nevertheless appropriate to conduct a more accurate analysis of the reach and extent of his Egyptian researches, to which his nephew refers to with such devotion and in such detail.

Given that the references to these studies are scattered throughout his works, his contributions have not hitherto been properly assessed. And since we know that his contempo-

⁶⁹ See the edition of the *Enneads* of Sabellico (1560), fol. 38: “sic et statuarum usus sic et literarum, quibus . . . Aegyptus usa est, ut, quae sacrae dicerentur, sacerdotibus dumtaxat notae essent, alterum genus vulgo patuit. Fueruntque literarum figurae haud tales, ut ex illis syllabae coalescerent, sed animantibus extremisque hominum partibus variisque instrumentis artificumque imprimis perquam similes. Talis imaginum inscriptio vetustis quibusdam peregrinarum rerum monumentis adhuc Romae visitur, singulisque, ut videre est, sua inerat figurae significatio, ut in accipitre celeritas, in crocodilo malum, custodia in oculo, sicque aliae in aliis, quo apparet non Phoenicum id fuisse inventum, ut arbitrati sunt quidam, sed Aethiopum. Atque inde in Aegyptum primo, mox hinc, unde profectus Agenor dicitur, in Syriam translatum”. Sabellico follows Diodorus, see fol. 52: “Verum si quis altius, quae de literarum inventionem traduntur, animo consideret, verissima videbantur, quae Diodorus in historiis prodidit”. As regards the columns in “terra seriadica” see the relevant passage cited above ch. 5 nt. 25.

⁷⁰ See the attestation of Fra Urbano in the *Hieroglyphica* of Valeriano, Fol. 234: “et aetate nostra M. Antonium Sabellicum, dum apud nos graece diceret, . . . audivi”. Sabellico, whose patronymic was Coccio was born in 1436 at Vicovaro near Tivoli. He was a student of Pomponio Leto and then a teacher in Udine, Venice and Verona. His last years were spent back in Venice, where he was Valeriano’s elocution teacher.

raries honored in that simple Franciscan friar as much his excellence in the teaching of Greek as his moral character, we must assume that he was also the most authoritative interpreter of the hieroglyphics, something which as we know excited the passionate spirit of the humanists during the time. For this reason modern Egyptology should recognize him as one of its main precursors.

Compared to other humanists, Fra Urbano had the advantage of being able to give directly an account of the immense wealth of the hieroglyphic script as a result of his visit to Egypt. He had visited that country not so much as a pilgrim but as a scholar who had gone there following suggestions that Francesco Colonna might have made to him.

In fact, as described above, in 1466, the year in which the twenty-three year old Urbano taught novices in the Franciscan monastery of Treviso, the future author of the *Hypnerotomachia* had returned to his own Dominican convent full of enthusiasm for the splendors of the ancient world and for the study of hieroglyphs which had led him originally to Rome. Up to 1472 both brothers remained in this small city that despite its provincialism and thanks to its publishers and printers, participated in the lively cultural debates which arose at the time. So it was that, ignoring the rules of their respective orders, the two scholars, sharing a great passion for antiquity, eventually became close to each other and Urbano must have continued to be consumed with a great passion to study that splendid ancient heritage right in its place of origin, namely Egypt and Greece. Hence the long journey the Franciscan monk undertook to the East, where he had the opportunity to visit Constantinople, Asia Minor, Greece and its islands, to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre and travel to Egypt and finally Arabia – perhaps he even tried to track down the columns of the children of Seth or those of Osiris. As Pierio his nephew says, wherever Fra Urbano went, he indeed never failed, as “*totius antiquitatis vir studiosissimus*,” [a man most knowledgeable about all antiquities], to report in his journal all that seemed worthy of note including inscriptions.

Furthermore Fra Urbano could confess that at the sight of hieroglyphs “*in tot pyramidum et inscriptionum antiquorum memoriis*” [with the memory of such pyramids and ancient inscriptions], in Egypt, in Rome or elsewhere, he was caught up – “*diu multumque*,” [for a long time and often], – with the wish to

decipher them. It can therefore be assumed that his journal contained many descriptions of hieroglyphs. One even wonders if Fra Urbano had tried to prepare tracings, just as Ciriaco had done previously. But, in this regard we can only speculate, since the precious manuscript of his journal is lost like many other monuments of research by the humanists on hieroglyphics. Perhaps one could try to reconstruct it from the individual accounts that were provided by Pierio, the fortunate owner of the text; besides it would be useful to know whether it was from this journal that Pierlo Valeriano recovered the description of the Lion Gate of Mycenae and the sketch of the Erechtheion.⁷¹

Fra Urbano returned to Italy passing through Sicily with a complete picture of the richness of ancient Egyptian monuments and well aware of the difficulties of their interpretation. Starting in Catania, he made an excursion to Etna and visited Constantine Lascaris in Messina. Thanks to the proficiency he had acquired in Greek, he was then called to Florence as the teacher of the young Giovanni de' Medici, the future Pope Leo X. He seems to have remained there during second half of the eighties of the fifteenth century where he participated, "non indecenter" [not improperly] as Pierio writes, in the Platonic Academy, having such close relations with some of the members that when in 1513 he went to pay tribute to Leo X he did not fail to revive the memory of his Florentine life during the return journey from Rome.⁷²

Thanks to his direct experience and knowledge Fra Urbano was certainly the greatest expert on hieroglyphics among the scholars of the Platonic Academy, even if we assume that in the beginning he would have lacked any intimacy with the relevant remarks of the classical authors familiar to the circle of Florentine Platonists then led by Ficino and Poliziano. Confirmation of his having collected "*Rerum harum interpretationes apud scriptores diligentissime*" [most diligently, the interpretations of these things amongst writers] must therefore be traced to this period. It must have become obvious to Urbano during his frequent discussions with members of the Academy that there were gaps in his knowledge of the classics and this probably persuaded him to take the opportunity to intensify his study of

⁷¹ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 3: "Mycenarum portis. . . leones statuebantur". See the reproduction of the *Erechtheion* on fol. 366, although the text refers to another construction described by Pausanias in Laconia. The error was probably due to Valeriano.

⁷² See Ticozzi cit., p.51.

ancient authors profiting from the proximity of the library of Lorenzo. In this way, uniting the most profound knowledge of the monuments with what the Florentine Studio could offer in the field of hieroglyphics, he ended by even surpassing Colonna who, at this time in the early nineties, was about to complete his *Hypnerotomachia*.

We do not know if the latter and Fra Urbano continued to be associated in Venice, as they had previously in Treviso, a city that owing to the small number of scholars there favored such contact. We do not even know – though presumably it was the case – whether Urbano was among the few who visited Colonna. The fact is that while the author of the *Hypnerotomachia* conducted his studies on hieroglyphs outside the mainstream of the humanistic world, Urbano and his researches enjoyed great popularity not so much from his publications, but rather as result of the high regard for his teaching. In fact, in his garden near the convent, a garden where myrtles, junipers and boxwood formed columns⁷³ and pyramids similar to those described in the *Hypnerotomachia*, Urbano continued to teach Greek, to comment on the classics and to compare these with the rich knowledge he had acquired on hieroglyphics. His nephew Pierio would frequent the garden and it was there that the great scholars of the famous university visited him. And it was from there that the fame of the hieroglyphic studies of the Venetians spread throughout the scientific community.

☛ *The Hieroglyphica of Horapollo and the Aldine Academy*

The systematic study of the text of Horapollo by scholars of the Aldine Academy under the guidance of Fra Urbano was very fruitful. Already in the middle of the revision of the manuscripts which were very debased, they were able to interpret through its hieroglyphs the enigmatic images of an ancient figurative work. The ingenious interpreter was the nephew of Fra Urbano, who, quickly able to capitalize on the experience that his uncle had had with the work of Horapollo, was immediately able to provide the correct solution.

All this happened during a discussion with Antonius Agnellus, a scholar who was a member of the French embassy led by Johannes Lascaris in Venice from 1503, just before the transfer of Fra Valeriano to the University of Padua, where he was later in 1505 to hear the lectures of the noted philosopher Leonico Tomeo, a friend of his uncle. Just as had happened in earlier

⁷³ See *ibid.*, p. 57.

discussions, which were focused above all on numismatic issues but which ignited the enthusiasm of Pierio whenever he observed any aspect of “quod ad Aegyptica hieroglyphica faceret” [that which related to Egyptian hieroglyphs], on that occasion the discussion was about the interpretation of an “imaguncula ex orichalco” [a little brass image] representing a recumbent man on whom sixteen *putti* were climbing at the side of which could be seen three urns with water connected to a pipe. Agnellus, who did not believe that this image came just from the imagination of the artist, then turned to Pierio who recognized it immediately as a symbol of the Nile. A famous passage from Philostratus in fact provides the explanation that the sixteen cherubs were none other than the same number of cubits measuring the depth of the river at the time of the floods, while in the urns Pierio recognized the interpretation of Horapollon according to whom they alluded to the three causes of the flooding of the Nile. In sum, Valeriano interpreted the hieroglyph as “Nili ascensus” [the rising of the Nile].⁷⁴

Later Pierio would have an even better occasion to showcase his interpretative ability. In fact, he was in Rome when, during the time of Leo X, the colossal statue of the Nile was brought to light.⁷⁵^{liii} As he himself tells it he immediately recalled the conversation with Agnellus and certainly cannot have failed to impress the Romans when he was able to repeat his performance. Thus he saw in the frogs and the lizards that adorned the base of the statue, the hieroglyph of the artists, Batrachia and Saura, that one supposes were satisfied with this recognition that they had created this work of art!^{liv}

Just the chapter of the work of Horapollon from which that of Valeriano was derived (bk 1, ch. XXI)^{lv} was better adapted to elicit from the humanists a deep impression, given that here he interprets the hieroglyphs on the basis of astronomical, physical and medical considerations. The reliability of the results achieved as a result of this reading of the statue of the Nile not only increased the later authority of Pierio, but also

^{liii} A picture of this magnificent statue can be seen at <http://www.theoi.com/Gallery/S36.1.html> (10/17/2012). The statue is found at the Musei Vaticani, Museo Chiaramonti, Braccio Nuovo, inv. 2300. It is a Roman copy of a Greek original. See also C. Lazzaro, ‘River Gods: personifying nature in sixteenth century Italy’, *Locus Amoenus: Gardens and Horticulture in the Renaissance*, ed. A. Samson, Blackwell, 2012 pp. 70-95. It is worth noting that according to Pausanias’ *Description of Greece* 8.24.12 river gods were always carved in white marble except for the Nile which should be carved in black marble. A second Nile statue from Monte Cavallo is on the Campidoglio. See Curran, 2007, 7.

^{liv} “Frogs” and “lizards” in Greek.

^{lv} Horapollon I.21: “How they signify the rising of the Nile”; πῶς Νείλου ἀνάβασιν. The three urns represent the three causes of the flooding of the Nile: the land of Egypt, the ocean (i.e. the incoming tide) and rain storms.

⁷⁴ See *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 338, where Valeriano dedicates the Commentary on *De urnis Nili, lucerna*, to Bened. Agnellus, nephew of Antonius.

⁷⁵ See Gregorovius, vol. VIII cit. p. 146. In his *Antiquates urbis Roma*, 1527 edition, Fulvio describes how it was found near the *Iseum*: “ubi nuperrime Nili fluminis marmoreum mirae magnitudinis simulacrum effossum vidimus et in eodem marmore ranaum et lacertarum parva quaedam signa, quae Batracos et Sauros operis structores - ita illi vocabantur - caelaverunt, in tantum mercede contenti ipsorum, ut ejusmodi reptilia sua nomina experientia scalperentur”.

demonstrated the close relationship between Roman sculptures and Egyptian hieroglyphs, given that the symbolic image of the three urns could also be found on the obelisks. All this helped to give particular importance to other remarks made in this chapter, according to which the Egyptians were accustomed to decorate with a lion the works constructed to protect against the floods that is with a hieroglyph symbolizing the inundation of the Nile. Recognizing then a similar hieroglyphic idea in those innumerable ancient leonine heads conserved as decorations on fountains and gutters, they came to suppose that the same thing could be valid for those other forms that seemed to invest some symbolic significance in what were supposed to have been applied to the hieroglyphs of the classical authors. Thus Alberti's hypothesis, according to which figurative works from Greek and Roman times must have consisted of a language of images that the student would have to decipher, was confirmed. It was at this point that in the eyes of the humanists it became clear what enormous influence Egyptian symbolic thought had had for hundreds and hundreds of years on Western culture.

Such a concept could not have been better expressed than by the words of Pierio, who, inspired by a ride across the ruins of Rome, writes: "*Magnam dicendi materiam sumministrabat arca illa pingendi caelandique ratio, quae apud eos (veteres) fuisset, qui mutam quandam orationem per rerum imagines mente concipiendam non ullo vocis sono, literarumve complexu enunciandam excogitassent, autoribus dubio procul Aegypti sacerdotibus, quos universae mox nationes, ubiubi ulla rerum disciplina vigeat, tacito consensu cunctis in operibus imitari studuissent*". [Saying that the purpose of the secrets depicted in painting and carving, which was derived from them (the ancients) and which may have expressed some silent thoughts of the pictures of those things conceived in the mind but not enunciated through speech or through the medium of letters, derived without a doubt from the priestly authority of Egypt so that soon all nations, wherever any study of such things flourished, by tacit consent tried to imitate them in their works of art]. This clear understanding of Egyptian symbolism as the driving force of Western figurative language could only have derived from Fra Urbano. Always concerned for the education of his nephew, the latter had continued to put Pierio in touch with information and other matters relat-

ing to his memorable journey to the East, urging in particular the study of images on coins in which Valeriano claimed to be an expert, at least by inheritance rather than just from book-learning.⁷⁶

Although Venetian scholars had the reputation of illustrating the development of allegory by using the text of Horapollo it should be emphasized that the consequences that were drawn for the interpretation of hieroglyphs were still questionable in many respects. Although it can be noted that there was at the time no perception of the difference between a hieroglyphic system of a phonetic type and one of enigmatic characters, these scholars were able to grasp in the exposition of Horapollo, the fusion of Egyptian and Greek culture and the references back to Egyptian sources of the interpretations that the author had taken from Aristotle and other classical authors. A similar misunderstanding of the actual origin of the *Hieroglyphica* had the consequence that everything in classical literature that had an allegorical, symbolic or metaphorical character was considered suitable for an interpretation of the hieroglyphs. According to the humanists what these concealed in fact emanated from the same spirit that had inspired Horapollo in Egypt and had attracted such philosophers as Plato and Pythagoras!

It was Daniele Rinieri, a student of Fra Urbano, who was to support the possible use in this sense of the wealth of knowledge transmitted by classical authors. An extract of his reflects so much the mentality with which the humanists approached the study of hieroglyphics, that I think it should be quoted here in full: "Nam quamvis rerum effigies pro verbis positae sint ab Aegyptiis, in iis tamen, uti video, philosophorum, poetarum, historiarum et divinarum etiam disciplinarum sententiae dili-

⁷⁶ Valeriano went horse riding in the company of the patriarch of Aquileia, G. Grimani, grandson of the famous Domenico, see *Hieroglyphica* cit, fol. 194 ff. Also present were members of the Roman Academy, their president Agnolo Colocci as well as Antonio Marosticano, Baptista Casalius, Pimpinellus and Petrus Aleander. The discovery of a statue of Venus with a dolphin led Valeriano to some research that should be repeated. The discovery is to be placed in the period in which the Academy could still get together undisturbed that is before the Sack of Rome. Given that Valeriano had abandoned the city in 1521 only to return after 1527, the discovery must have occurred while Leo X was still alive. On the instruction received from his uncle in the study of hieroglyphics, see *ibid.*, fol. 338: "Idem (numismatum) propemodum studium ab Urbano patruo meo erat mihi quodammodo hereditarium, qui. . . de peregrinationibus suis Aegyptiis, Arabicis, Palaestinis semper habebat novi aliquid, quod scitu dignum et utile communicaret mecum"; for numismatics see fol. 71: "ex veterum praecipue nummis potius quam ex libris (didici)".

tescunt; quaeque illi augustis oculorum spatiis includere, reliqui ea per latissimos eloquentiae campos produxere, unde ansa datur commodissima rem amplificandi et quaeque libuerit, cum simile nusquam desit argumentum, pervagandi". [For although images were used by the Egyptians in place of words, in these, as I see it, they hid both the divine and secular ideas of the philosophers, poets and historians; they provided great visual opportunities and allowed the widest field for eloquence, so that as a result it was a most convenient medium for ideas to be extended in any way that was desired and to let the imagination wander wherever there was nothing else that was contradictory]. These statements echo the trends described above that had characterized the study of hieroglyphs in Florence and which were exactly those for which Urbano, Rinieri's teacher, had brought him to Venice. The abundance of images revealed by Marsilio in the small depiction of the snake in the form of circle was very extensive. And it was no coincidence that Pico was among the first to see allusions to the hieroglyphs in the figurative language of the Bible.⁷⁷

The belief that there was hidden in Egyptian hieroglyphs a wisdom that amongst other things could illuminate any natural mystery was particularly strengthened by the extraordinary features of both known and unknown animals that Horapollon had described. From the way he had been able to put together in his short observations a very accurate description of animal life, together with a surprising amount of psychological perception, how he had illustrated with features drawn from the world's plants and animals the most recondite states of mind and the most subtle distinctions of human character, the humanists deduced that Egyptian priests – "viri totius arcanorum naturae conscii" [men knowledgeable in all the secrets of nature] as Pierio expressed it – had intentionally encapsulated all their knowledge in these enigmatic images.

Since in the *Hieroglyphica* the oriental fantasies of the author were freely displayed, scholars came to accept anything that it said. So even at the turn of the century, separate headings in treatises of zoology – that of Ulysses Aldrovandi for example – expressed the hieroglyphic meaning of individual animals. Direct experience by humanists of strange animals, which became more and more numerous in Europe as a result

⁷⁷ In respect of the conversation between Rinieri and Fra Urbano, in which this view is expressed, see below ch. 5 nt. 83 and *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 233 ff., in particular fol. 236.

of the opening of the sea routes to the Indies and the discovery of America, contributed to align this culture with the predictions of Horapollo. For example, until then information derived from antiquity about the intelligence of elephants had been greeted with disbelief. But from the moment that he saw that an elephant with the name of Hanno sent by Emmanuel the Great to Pope Leo X corresponded in this respect to the classical description, Valeriano, an eyewitness of the event, was convinced of the truth of other descriptions of animals that had previously been considered only idle gossip. If the ancients, and especially the Egyptians,⁷⁸ recognized a particular tradition of natural history, he assumed that it must provide a new class of interpretation for scholars. It was hoped that through direct observation these scholars might be able to discover the essence and the features of images from the realm of nature and thereby add to their understanding of the hieroglyphs.

☞ *The hieroglyphic studies of Erasmus and Fra Urbano*

In an attempt to explain the motto “semper festina lente”, in the *Adagia*, Erasmus does not just confine himself to understanding the expression but also tries to develop a method of interpretation through a very detailed analysis of the three images of the Augustan motto, the circle, the dolphin and the anchor. The great erudition which he employed, his discernment of the underlying philosophical problems, the brilliance of his style, the seduction of his conclusions all contributed to ensure that the result was very much appreciated by his contemporaries. Digressions on hieroglyphics were incorporated by Erasmus in every part of the text and were expanded more and more in every new edition. They had a decisive influence on humanistic

⁷⁸ See *ibid.*, fol. 20^v: “Caeterum omnem historiae antiquae fidem adimplevit Hanno elephas, quem initio diximus ab Emanuele Lusitaniae rege Indiaeque triumphatore Leoni X. Pont. Maximo dono missum, ac Romae vidimus . . . Hinc factum, ut ad ejus significata et eorum causas recensendas effusior accesserim, qui, priusquam animal inspicerem, ne pro anilibus fabulis eorum bona pars acciperetur, veritus fuisssem. Illud autem profiteri possumus, de reliquis animantibus, quaecumque fidem excedere videantur, scriptorum auctoritati aequiescere”. Then follows an interesting discussion of the rhinoceros (fol. 21) that was sent by Emmanuel to Leo X but which drowned during the sea voyage, so that the pontiff only got pictures of it with two horns, as is apparent from the description of Valeriano, “unum quidem in nare cornu habet, alterum superne prorumpit”. The image seems to have been similar to that which Dürer used for his drawing. Copies of the engraving by Dürer can be found in the Basel edition of the *Hieroglyphica* fol. 21. Valeriano is uncertain even whether the rhino was nearly identical to the unicorn, a known symbol of innocence, but finally he decided against this identification

research on hieroglyphics where there can be found repeated to the letter or even paraphrased the main expressions of Erasmus' learned dissertation and I repeat here the main passages.

"Sic enim vocantur aenigmatae sculpturae" [for thus are described the enigmatic sculptures] – in this way Erasmus begins to describe the "monimenta literarum hieroglyphicarum" [monuments of literary hieroglyphs] – "quarum priscis saeculis multus fuit usus, potissimum apud Aegyptios vates ac theologos, qui nefas esse dicebant, sapientiae mysteria literis communibus vulgo profano prodere, quemadmodum nos facimus, sed siquid cognitu dignum judicassent, id animantium rerumque variarum expressis figuris ita representabant, non ut cuivis statim promptum esset conjicere; verum si cui singularum rerum proprietates, si peculiaris cujusque animantis vis ac natura ac cognita penitusque perspecta fuisset, is demum collectis symbolorum conjecturis aenigma sententiae deprehendebat" [which were much used in early ages, especially amongst the Egyptians prophets and theologians, who said that it was wrong to reveal the mysteries of wisdom to the common people in ordinary letters, as we do, but if they judged something worthy to be known they expressed it in images of various animals and objects so not everyone could immediately understand what was intended; but if you knew the properties of the things and the peculiar nature and power of the animals, and could put together the hints given by the symbols you could understand these enigmas]. According to Erasmus the possibility of resolving the enigma of these hieroglyphic images – which he alludes to in the last sentence quoted above – was invested with so much importance that the humanist scholar returns to it soon after saying: "Porro hoc scripturae genus non solum dignitatis plurimum habet, verum etiam voluptatis non parum, si quis modo rerum, ut dixi, proprietatis penitus perspectas habuerit; id quod partim contingit solerti contemplatione rerum causarumque naturalium, partim liberalium cognitione disciplinarum" [Furthermore, this kind of writing possesses not only the greatest dignity, but in truth also provides a great deal of pleasure to a person who as I have said has the ability to look into the qualities of things; because it mingles both the scientific contemplation of things and natural causes and the study of literature]. The study of natural science handed down by the ancients and the personal observation of nature were for Erasmus the essential requirements for the study of hieroglyphs.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ See the passage frequently quoted, cited in Erasmus, fol. 112.

All this reflects the prevailing view among Venetian scholars about the character of hieroglyphics in the years in which the *Hieroglyphica* came to light. It was not by chance that the comments of Erasmus were more precisely defined after close contact with the Aldine Academy, thus allowing the humanist scholar in a few months in 1508 to turn his meagre Paris edition of the *Adagia* into a work that was destined to make history. Here, in the matter of hieroglyphics, Erasmus espoused the view that the Italians, with their studies, were certainly further advanced than Dutch scholars.^{lvi} In the *Adagia* Erasmus does not mention, for example the *De Iside et Osiride* of Plutarch among the sources of hieroglyphics, although he said he had the manuscript of the *Moralia*, that would be published in 1509, at his disposal during his stay in Venice. It seems that during the time when Erasmus was enlarging the *Adagia* he did not have the time to examine Plutarch's difficult work on the Egyptians, although Fra Urbano was certainly amongst those who knew him during the time of his Florentine stay.⁸⁰ Considering that that Erasmus speaks of Urbano as the Venetian scholar who had helped him in a completely unselfish manner, you could reasonably assume that such recognition refers to the information on hieroglyphics that the famous scribe had provided him with. Of course, the penetrating mind of Erasmus will then have been able to give a very personal color to these references but the fact remains that it must have been only the information of Urbano that was the foundation of the Erasmian analysis of hieroglyphics.

Even the criticism of the attempt to diffuse more widely the religious mysteries underlying the expression "Quemadmodum facimus nos" could be traceable to Fra Urbano. Actually it was characteristic of Erasmus to use similar formulas through which he intended to show himself as someone who was loyal to official doctrine but on the other hand, it was just at this time in 1508 that Erasmus had felt the need to edit the New Testament and translate it into Latin. So it seems quite remarkable that this bitter thought^{lvii} should have come into his mind although it is more likely to have been introduced as a result of his discussions with Urbano. This latter, despite his passion for Greek, had been, unlike other humanists, a faithful adherent to

^{lvi} Erasmus does confirm in the same essay on *Festina Lente* that during his stay in Venice, the Italians were very helpful and hospitable. He contrasts this attitude with that of his own countrymen and the Germans.

^{lvii} Presumably referring to the ironic "as we do" in the passage above reflecting the dissatisfaction of Erasmus with the control by the Church of the "mysteries of wisdom".

⁸⁰ The addition "et Plutarchus in commentariis de Osiride" and the description of the assistance received from the Aldine academicians in Venice are in the 1526 edition of the *Adagia*, fol. 335 ff., while they are missing in that of 1513.

the rules of a mendicant order. Erasmus' praise for the Egyptians as users of a script incomprehensible to most people, will have made the study of hieroglyphics even more attractive and valuable to Urbano, reinforcing him in the belief that this research should be restricted to a narrow circle of scholars. Consequently Erasmus gave his work a form that would make it welcome to all who were hostile to any change, contributing for his part and in no small measure to securing a niche for the study of hieroglyphics in an era of growing oppression for research in general.

An example of how narrow the views on the hieroglyphic texts were thanks to remarkable texts such as the *Adagia*, one of the famous books of that time, is represented by the *Antiquarum lectionum commentarii* of L. Ricchieri (Caelius Rhodiginus) from Rovigo. It was a sort of compendium then very popular which dealt with all kinds of antiquarian and philological topics as well as those from natural philosophy. The work was printed by the father-in-law^{lviii} of Aldus in Milan in 1516, a year after the author after a lively intellectual life, had obtained from Francis I the chair once occupied by Demetrios Chalcondylas.^{lix} Precisely in these years, Ludovico, at the time sixty-five years old, began to re-consider his life as a teacher, a profession he had taught in a private school and practised in many different places. After a long stay in France, Ricchieri had taught in his native city which he had been forced out of in 1504. Moving to Vicenza in 1508, he then went to Ferrara and afterwards to Padua. In 1512 he returned to Rovigo. In Ferrara, Ludovico befriended Calcagnini who at that time had shown interest in the *Horapollo*. It does not seem that Ludovico came into contact with Erasmus until the winter of 1508 when he was in Padua, even though we know that Ricchieri had made a very thorough study of the *Adagia*. Some years later Ludovico confessed that he had abandoned the publication of a similar work after the text of Erasmus had appeared, even if in his lectures drawn from his *Antiquarum lectionum commentarii* he would make frequent use of the *Adagia*. In his work on hieroglyphics Ricchieri, in addition to reproducing famous passages from Lucan, Diodorus, Apuleius and Tacitus shows his dependence on the text of Erasmus, since he incorporates from there not only Horapollo but also authorities on hieroglyphics such as Chaeremon and he even plunders the Suda. After having recorded the animals which according to Horapollo expressed the concept "contumeliosus" [injurious], – i.e. the partridge, the

^{lviii} Andrea Torresani, Aldus Manutius' partner. Aldus died in 1515.

^{lix} Demetrios Chalcondylas (1423-1511) was a Greek who settled in Italy, taught at Perugia, Padua and Florence and in 1491 became a Professor of Greek in Milan.

eel, the dove and the hippo – he reports the entry in the Suda according to which the Egyptians represented the head of a stork at the top of the sovereign's scepter and at the bottom a hippo to signify that power is submissive to justice. Even for the status of the ἱερογραμματεῖς [sacred scribes] that Erasmus had called “vates ac theologi,” [prophets and theologians] our author follows the learned Dutchman. For Ricchieri they were in fact diviners just like those who had foretold the powers of Moses to the Pharaoh.

But what is striking is that Ricchieri was unable to connect the priest Horapollo, who, according to the Suda lived in the time of Theodosius, to the author of the *Hieroglyphica*^{81, lx} who is casually cited in a subsequent note. That the certainty of having before him a very ancient work was in fact enough for him, we can believe from the correspondence with Calcagnini dating back to these same years in which the author, speaking of the contents of the *Hieroglyphica*, did not even have the courage to challenge in the least the hypothesis advanced by Ficino at the time according to whom the author of the work could even have been Horus, the sovereign of Egypt who was venerated there like a god. And although Calcagnini did not believe that the *Hieroglyphica* originated with such an authority, he observes prudently: “Haec ab Horo mutuati, si modo Hori libellus, qui circumfertur” [this is derived from Horus but only the little book of Horus which is in circulation].

☞ *The humanistic studies of hieroglyphs and the scepticism of Fra Urbano*

The perplexity of Calcagnini, which certainly dates back to Leonico Leoniceno, an important philosopher and physician, the Nestor^{lxi} of the arts faculty of Ferrara, as well as a foreign member of the Aldine Academy, can be attributed to the alleged completeness that Horapollo had succeeded in giving to this promising subject. The content of the work preserved its influence over the beliefs of the time, assuming that it is admitted that it had not been obscured by misunderstandings occurring during the translation from the Egyptian version of Philip or

lx See ch 1, nt. xxxi above for the dates of the two Egyptians named Horapollo who have been cited as possible authors of the *Hieroglyphica*.

lxi Niccolo Leoniceno who is frequently referred to in the literature as the Nestor of Renaissance medicine as a result of his great age possessed a remarkable library the contents of which were not generally made available to scholars until after his death at the age of 95 or 96 in 1524. See [⁸¹ See *Antiquarum lectionum Commentarios, sicuti concinnarat olim vindex Ceselius, ita nunc eosdem per incuriam interceptos reparavit Lodovicus Caelius Rhodiginus*. We cite from the second Paris edition of 1517; see the above passage cited in bk. XI, ch. XXV. In bk. VII, ch. XXXVI we read: “Horapollo Grammaticus et Aegyptio nobilis fuit, arte clarissimus nec ullo veterum Theodosii tempestate Gloria inferior”. The Venetian edition was certainly recommended to his friend Aldus by Jean Grolier, but Aldus had died already in 1515. - On the life of Rhodiginus see Tiraboschi cit., vol. XX, pp. 1174 ff. and the entry in the *Biographie Générale*.](http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&rls=com.microsoft:en-us:IE-SearchBox&rlz=1I7ADBR_en&rbm=bks&q=inauthor:%22Peter+Elmer%22&sa=X&ei=NsLXTolDiOTRAv-3dAN&ved=0CCIQ9Ag(10/17/2012). Elmer and Grell, <i>Health, disease, and society in Europe, 1500-1800: a source book</i>, Manchester University Press, 2004, p. 59.</p>
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from the mistakes of copyists. But to these aspects of the matter the philological teaching of Fra Urbano continued to make important contributions. What is certain is that, despite their critical faculties, the most skilled scholars believed that the text was an emanation of the highest human knowledge from those Egyptian priests who could only have lived and have written when “the world was still young”.

In contrast, compared to the hieroglyphs that were conserved on the obelisks or in other places, there were an extremely small number of pictograms described by Horapollo, while a comparison between the information provided by the latter and that given by other authors showed that even the hieroglyphs illustrated by Horapollo did not even have a meaning similar to that derived directly from the Egyptian. Thus it was realized for example that, in the case of the bee, Horapollo did not give the meaning of “king” which was attributed to it by Ammianus and similarly in the interpretation of the hare given by Plutarch according to whom it alludes to “hearing” and so on. Despite the rather few references by Greek and Latin authors from which it might be supposed that they were in fact little versed in the secrets of Egyptian science since otherwise there would not have been such short descriptions in this regard, the humanists relied too much on a blind faith in the authority of the classics to be able to question the various and divergent interpretations. They ended up in a position of having the simultaneous existence of several different interpretations of the same hieroglyph and blaming the *Hieroglyphica* for not having given the correct interpretation.

Some humanists – a minority – suggested that they had in hand a compilation of the *Hieroglyphica* put together by the Horapollo who supposedly lived at the time of Theodosius and was quoted by the Suda. A more acceptable alternative hypothesis was that Philip had collected only “satis curiose”, [curiously enough], individual fragments of the hieroglyphs “ex hieroglyphico literarum Aegyptiarum interprete, cui Horapollinem nomen faciunt” [interpreted from the hieroglyphs of Egyptian letters to which they gave the name of Horapollo]. Such was the opinion of Pierio Valeriano.⁸²

The complaint against an overly-brief summary of such a fundamental subject and the subsequent criticisms voiced

⁸² See *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 125. In fol. 233 Fra Urbano defines the work of Horapollo: “Niliaci opusculum, in quo talia promittuntur, lemmata summam quaedam attigerit atque ea, qualiacumque sint, in manus nostras corruptissima pervenerint”.

against Philip grew even greater as scholars became convinced that everything in Greek and Latin literature which had even just the appearance "*aliquid aegyptiacum sapere*" [of some Egyptian knowledge] had been condensed into the brevity of hieroglyphic images. In this way, since they were increasingly convinced that the hieroglyphs had hidden treasures of wisdom, it seemed to them all the more serious that the lack of skill of a translator prevented access to that knowledge.

No wonder then that just based on such considerations the humanists grew sceptical as to their ability to decipher the hieroglyphs. And as these doubts increased so hope of being able to enjoy this ancient symbolism was reduced and even more their identification with hieroglyphics. What happened to these scholars could happen to anyone trying to solve a riddle, believing that you have understood some details correctly whilst not giving up a secret hope that you might be able to uncover the whole of the mystery. In fact, can we expect these scholars to know anything of the secret of Egyptian hieroglyphics whose signs that indicated determinatives and then whole words played a growing role in providing separate meanings? It was this conviction, which despite all their fantasies and doubts, ensured that they always returned to confront the Egyptian sphinx.

This happened even to Fra Urbano who did not allow himself to be deceived by his own learning and to think that he could interpret entire inscriptions from the obelisks. When in doubt he resisted the temptation of presenting facts that he could have easily defended before his contemporaries on the basis of the unique experiences he had had during his long journeys. So, despite having devoted a lifetime to the study of hieroglyphs, a couple of years before his death (1524) he recognized as a true scholar that he possessed nothing that satisfied him in regard to the latter. In spite of his studies in the field and in spite of extensive research in the literature, he had not found anything of real significance and never made any real interpretation.

This admission that posterity, in particular Kircher, should have taken to heart, is pronounced by Urbano at the beginning of a memorable dialogue with Daniele Rinieri and his guests Leonico Leonicensi and Leonico Tomeo, whom he met to discuss hieroglyphic topics while he was in the midst of his teaching. We should be grateful to his nephew Pierio Valeriano that during his stay in Venice in the late autumn of 1522 he had been able to record this discussion, which he attended just as a listener. Afterwards, he sent notes of the meeting to his uncle for

revision so that even today it seems one can listen to a discussion on humanist hieroglyphics.

Even if we can assume that Valeriano, in editing this discussion in his *Hieroglyphica*, included his uncle's desired corrections and, as relates to the structure of the work, limited the subject-matter only to the hieroglyphs of the eye and other parts of the human head, his record still includes a lot of actual and incidental observations so that the discussion gives us a very faithful idea of the manner in which Venetian scholars were accustomed to address hieroglyphic issues.

Pierio records all the ideas that humanists had considered during the period of the general diffusion of the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo and of the *Hypnerotomachia* and all the doubts and expectations inherent in such interpretations. If we consider that other artists such as for instance Titian must have been in the room where this discussion took place you have a pretty vivid idea of the importance of this confrontation that centered on the question of how hieroglyphs were to be rendered from the figurative point of view.⁸³

The reason for the visit of Rinieri and his guests concerned some hieroglyphs sent by Bembo to his friend the Senator, this time from Rome. They were copies taken from obelisks and from the *Tavola Iliaca*.⁸⁴ In vain they had tried, at the home of Rinieri, to understand them even with the help of Horapollo, but in the end they came to the conclusion that the only solu-

⁸³ Urbano's speech, mentioned several times, is contained in bk. XXXIII (*De iis, quae per oculum, aures, nasum, os et in eo partes significantur ex sacris Aegyptiorum literis*) of the *Hieroglyphica* of Valeriano (fol. 233 ff.). The conversation can be dated thanks to the final remarks at the departure of the participants; fol. 241 reads: "die prius constituto, quo iterum essent conventuri, illi domum, ego in navim abii, mox Florentiam, quo fueram, ut scis per Julii Card. domini mei literas accersitus". At the time Valeriano was secretary to the future Pope Clement VII who from 1519 to 1523 was head of the Republic of Florence and from 1519 was in Florence. In 1522 he traveled to his hometown Belluno and he described the antiquities of the town. In September, during his return, he stopped in Venice and in December was again at the court of the cardinal, see Ticozzi cit, p. 118. According to the biographer of Valeriano, Titian was a friend of Fra Urbano whom the painter portrayed several times, "so that it is true he was still alive and could be seen at the end of the century (that is the eighteenth century) in the village of Castione". Perhaps one day it will be possible to confirm whether there is such a legend, see *ibid.*, p. 58.

⁸⁴ Since Bembo was in Padua from 1521, they must have been sent from Rome earlier, perhaps in the period when the *Tavola Iliaca* was discovered and when the statue was found in the Nile. In respect of the copies of the hieroglyphs, according to the description of the "exemplum" of the *Tavola Iliaca*, it is written: "obeliscorum etiam plurimas notas, quae illic (Romae) reperiuntur, quas quia ex Aegypto olim advectas manifestum est". See above, pp. 183 ff.

tion was to ask for the opinion of Urbano. At the beginning the latter expressed a certain scepticism but then ended by agreeing to the request, expounding all that was known about a hieroglyph depicting an eye derived from the passage of Pindar^{lxii} mentioned earlier. Despite his doubts Urbano did not believe that research in the field was not useful.

Participants in the discussion quickly picked up much material (images, symbols), in which the eye and other hieroglyphs were compared, using for their interpretation everything they thought underlay Egyptian symbolism. The starting point, however, was the information derived directly from the Egyptians and the hieroglyphics themselves to which we add those described by Colonna.

As Pierio writes, Rinieri used *The Interpretation of Dreams* by Artemidorus^{lxiii} which had been printed in Venice in 1518 and in which much Egyptian material can be found; Leonico Tomeo referred instead to Greek and Roman literature, of which he gives the primacy to treatises on natural science, while Urbano drew most of his interpretations from the imagery of the Scriptures. It was the linking of biblical symbols and hieroglyphics which aroused the applause of the audience. Using the example of what he had learned in Florence, Fra Urbano justified his views by referring in particular to the *Apologia* of Cyril, in which there is refuted the idea expressed by Julian the Apostate that Moses was taught through riddles and not by direct language, since the ancient seers would have used hieroglyphs or Pythagorean symbols.⁸⁵

lxii Pindar is not mentioned by Giehlow earlier in his essay.

lxiii Artemidorus' *Oneirocritica* was the most erudite in a long line of "dream books" from classical times which purported to interpret dreams in minute detail. Artemidorus recognized the allegorical nature of dreams and Freud acknowledges his importance particularly in his doctrine of interpretation by association. After the *edition princeps* of 1518 the first Latin edition was in 1539 and there have been numerous modern translations including that by R.J. White, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Torrance: Original Books, 1990) and a forthcoming edition from D. E. Harris-McCoy, *Artemidorus' Oneirocritica: Text, Translation, and Commentary*, Oxford University Press, 2012.

⁸⁵ Cyrilli, *Alexandrini archiepiscopi, opera*, ed. J. Aubertus, Paris, 1638. In the ninth book, (*Contra Julianum*) Aubertus translates as follows: "ajunt fuisse inter idolorum cultores aenigmatum artifices adeoque in iis figendis industria et arte praeditos, quos vulgo nominant hieroglyphos. Hi in templis et obeliscis literas incidentes nostris non utebantur, sed aliis figuris rerum naturas efformantes abstrusam quondam scientiam sapientioribus ingerebant". Following the example from Plutarch of the eye and the scepter as a hieroglyph for "deus," "aspis" for "coelum," "serpens" for time, and "craticula, in qua accensus erat ignis, corde appenso" for "ira", anger. He also mentions Pythagoras enumerating a series of his "enigmata" from the history of philosophy by Porphyry. In this context he writes: "An ergo, si quis in hieroglyphicas literas aut aenigmata Pythagorica oculos adjecerit, . . . intelligat igitur se violare legem, nisi jus idem statueret vellet in se quod in alios". Fra Urbano describes (Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 234 ff.) the relationship between biblical symbolism and the hieroglyphs as follows: "Cyrillus libro nono Apologiae, qua Juliani Apostatae maledicta cavillationesque in pietatem nostram refellere aggressus est, ubi ille Moseos aenigmata reprehendit, qui verbis, non occultis rerum involucris humanum genus erudire debuisset, is omnes qui antiquitus habiti sapientes hujusmodi institutionis genere usos indicat; cumque Aegyptios memorat, eos dicit per oculum et adjectum scipionem . . . Deum intelligere voluisse".

The reference made to Cyril by a Franciscan allows us to make a clarification of the historical record. After the archbishop of Alexandria had dedicated his books against Julian to the Emperor Theodosius, who with his conversion had dealt a decisive blow against paganism, Christian symbolism seemed to have triumphed across the board. The hieroglyphics on the obelisks and walls of the temples were considered demonic signs, or as Cyril writes, an “*abstrusa quaedam scientia*,” [a certain abstruse science] at least until the *Physiologus* (already widely quoted by the Fathers of the Church) had conferred on them a new Christian meaning.

However, neither the humanists nor clerics such as Fra Urbano took into account the deep contempt that the ecclesiastical author had shown towards hieroglyphics. In fact, permeated by the admiration that classical culture had had for Egyptian wisdom, the monk, Urbano, pointed out the similarity between biblical and Egyptian symbolism. And while Cyril was forced to make use of the similarity because he needed a reference-point for his argument, Fra Urbano used the passage as additional support for emphasizing that the image script of the sacred texts had an analogy in ancient hieroglyphs.

Earlier, in the case of hieroglyphs found in the medallions of the fifteenth century, one can see a similar evolution. Now it was directly expressed by Pierio, who, at least on this point, supported the ideas of his uncle. In fact, Pierio, calling them hieroglyphs, not only uses Christian symbolic images which were known more from the *Physiologus* than from Greek manuscripts and from popular traditions in passages of Origen, Augustine, Albertus Magnus and so on. But he goes back explicitly to the Horapollo for an Egyptian origin. So, for example, he is convinced that originally it was the vulture, and not the pelican that should be considered the symbol of piety, because only in the *Hieroglyphica* was it the first to inflict a wound to the thigh to save her children.

You might think that this criticism, which occasionally even manages to raise doubts about the statements of Albertus Magnus, would turn against the dogmatic meaning of the symbolic images of the *Physiologus*; on the contrary, Valeriano uses passages from Horapollo that have similarities capable of reinforcing ecclesiastical doctrine. In short, the disciple of Urbano sees in the exegesis of the *Horapollo* on the vulture as a symbol of motherhood (see bk. I, ch. XI, App III), an additional “*defensorium virginis Mariae*” [a tract in

defence of the Virgin Mary]. And this is fully in line with the medieval tradition.⁸⁶

The more that the identification of hieroglyphs with the imagery of the Bible was affirmed, the more the doubts expressed by those who had been the most critical of the interpretation of hieroglyphs evaporated. Valeriano himself experienced this and therefore one should not be surprised if in the end it catalyzed a new development of studies in this area that ended by making converts even amongst the most dedicated of the Jesuits.

On the other hand, even those who did not dare to express their own thoughts freely took refuge in "hieroglyphic writing". It guaranteed sufficient obscurity to completely hide their own ideas. Old Cyril could not have imagined that his brief review of Egyptian symbolism would offer the humanists an opportunity to revive hieroglyphics, the eradication of which had been undertaken generations before him, nor that there would be a favorite art and poetry in which heretical views similar to those that he had tried to fight in Julian the Apostate would easily be diffused.

⁸⁶ See on the vulture the introductory commentary of the *Hieroglyphica* by Cornelius Musaeus, Praesul Bitontinus, pp. 130 ff. "Sane vero factum hinc crediderim, ut majores nostri. . . alitem hanc (vulture) non autem pelicanum in sacrosanctis crucis apicem ea femorum vellicatione spectandum popularium omnium oculis erexerint . . . nusquam apud antiquissimos rerum scriptores, qui saxum hoc evolverunt, legimus avem aliam quam vulture femorum suorum vellicatu pullos suos pascere consuesse": on p. 132 there is a discussion of the vulture as "mater sive naturae genius" with the words: "esto igitur vultur documentum nobis, ne mysterium illud sacrosanctum, unde vera salus veraque felicitas nobis obtigit, fabulosum fuisse vel minimum quidem suspicari unquam in animum inducamus". A critique on Albertus Magnus is found on page 8. This denies that the lion is "febriculosus", as Valeriano believes on the authority of Horapollo.

ⁱ For bibliographic references to Valeriano's life and career, see Curran, 2007, cit., p. 367 nt. 6. Valeriano's other major work is the *De Litteratorum Infelicitate* (Venice: Sarzinam, 1620). Set in 1529 and probably written over the next ten years, it contains 110 vignettes on the lives and often gruesome deaths of Italian humanists. It laments the decline of Rome as a center of Renaissance studies after the 1527 sack. See Kenneth Gouwens, 'Lifewriting and the Theme of Cultural Decline in Valeriano's *De Litteratorum Infelicitate*', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, (1996) XXV11/1 pp. 87-96.

ⁱⁱ The first emblem book, the *Emblemata* by Andrea Alciato, was published in 1531 (see ch. 1 nt. ii above) but had been written earlier probably by 1521. By the time of the publication of the *Hieroglyphica* in 1556 many more emblem books had been published. Giehlow points out below that the *Hieroglyphica*, other than just two of the commentaries, was most likely complete by 1527 but that many of the commentaries were revised over the long period before publication.

ⁱⁱⁱ Subsequent editions of Valeriano's *Hieroglyphica* contain added material by other authors which are of interest. For example in the edition of Guarinus (Basel 1575), there is attached the *Aug. Caelii Curionis Hieroglyphicorum commentariorum libri II*, by Caelius Augustine Curio in the style of Valeriano with dedications to Basil Amerbach and Theodor Zwinger; the first book describes the mythological symbolism of gods and men and the second that of animals, geometric figures, stones and plants. In the edition of Kirchner (Frankfurt 1678) with the title, "*Eruditissimi viri Hieroglyphicorum Commentaria*", there is an additional anonymous text of an unknown author, perhaps from the end of the 16th or the beginning of the 17th Century: *Hieroglyphicorum Collectanea ex veteribus et notericis descripta, libri VI*. It reviews the entire previous symbolic literature,

CHAPTER 6

¶ THE *HIEROGLYPHICA* OF PIERIO VALERIANO BOLZANO: A LIFE'S WORK

If in a circle of humanist Italian scholars the idea had occurred of collecting hieroglyphic images as examples for poets or for use by artists, this most likely could only have happened amongst those Venetian scholars whom we have just discussed. And in the person of Pierio Valerianoⁱ there was combined every characteristic which could enable him to undertake such a project. Devoted from his youth to this field of study, expert on the *Hieroglyphica* and the *Hypnerotomachia* from the time of their publication and moved by enthusiasm for the discoveries he had made himself, he could add to these interests a major poetic talent. Pierio could compose Latin verse fluently either when it came to ennobling a religious or secular theme entrusted to him by some patron or when it came to expressing his own joys and sorrows. He, no less than Poliziano and Crinito, would have been inspired by the extraordinary richness of the symbolic images of the hieroglyphs and the chance to be able to give his poems an abundance of imagery. He also frequently emphasized the benefits of this imagery for the visual arts.

Nevertheless Valeriano did not take any step to which can be traced the emblematic genre as a particular form of artistic expression since his work on hieroglyphics only appeared at a date when for decades it had already long become customary to write and depict emblems.ⁱⁱ Inspired by the desire to fill in the gaps of Horapollo with allegories and symbols that were known in his time what Pierio was attempting was actually an almost endless task the conclusion of which was delayed from year to year. The "dignitas"¹[merit] given by Erasmus to studies on hieroglyphics, did not prevent Pierio from expressing in verse, before the completion of his work, the "voluptas," [pleasure] which informed such a commitment. And when finally he completed his work it was by then out of date.

But the *Hieroglyphica*ⁱⁱⁱ should not be considered an outcome of the "emblematic" tradition although Valeriano himself thanks to his achievements, significantly influenced the devel-

¹ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. *3^v: "Nam de praesentis argumenti vel oblectatione vel utilitate, quam earum rerum explicatio et cognitio affert, si velim pro dignitate dicere, nullus unquam exitus reperietur".

opment of that field. His *Hieroglyphica*, along with the *Commentaria de antiquitatibus* of Anniius of Viterbo and the *Hypnerotomachia* of Colonna, constituted a direct store of knowledge for posterity and through the different periods of its development, appears to have been the fruit of his entire life. Considering that they were not written as a whole but composed as a series of commentaries on individual groups of hieroglyphs, it is possible to follow their development, especially since the author dedicated to friends and benefactors each of the individual chapters, in which he also refers to experiences and events which are easily dateable.² Most of the text is from before the sack of Rome. It was written a short time after the death of Leo X^{iv} and gives a lively picture of Renaissance culture at the time of its heyday.

Apart from the brief reference of Gregorovius, the work of Pierio has so far been neglected as a source of understanding of humanistic thought.^v One reason for this must first of all be recognition of the disrepute in which studies on hieroglyphs were before the time of Champollion, although Leemans, in his edition, had used the great philological work in which Valeriano, as a worthy student of his uncle, had expanded the text of the Horapollon.³ Pierio's *Hieroglyphica* is therefore a work the study of which, while it has not yet been exploited for research on humanism, could go well beyond the scope that I have proposed in the present work. The wealth of the descriptions of sculptures, bronzes and medals, the reproduction of numerous inscriptions as well as the information that Valeriano provides regarding the possession and location of these works should today still attract

from Horapollon to Aiciato; see Volkmann cit., p. 76.

^{iv} Leo X died in 1521 so this short period of composition suggested by Giehlow, from 1521 to 1527, conflicts with the longer period outlined by him in the following pages; for instance the visit to the garden of Raphael who died in 1520, the dedication to Mellini who died in 1519 and the remark by Valeriano that he had been composing the commentaries for twenty-four years (see p. 220 below).

^v See above p. 28 nt. 44 for a citation for Gregorovius and p. 12 for the remarks of Fischart on emblems.

² See the letter of Valeriano to Egidio di Viterbo, *ibid.*, fol. 123: "ne uno continenter libro complexa (argumenta) odiosum ob rerum multitudinem volumen efficient, amicos mihi quosdam designavi, quorum hortatu modo hoc, modo illud a me conscriptum esset".

³ In the *Adnotatio* referring to bk. I, 65 of the Horapollon, Leemans cit. writes in connection with Valeriano: "Codd. nonnullorum et Edd. lectionem τοῦ ἔργου vitiosam esse jam indicaverat Pierius Hierogl. bk. XXXV veram scripturam τοῦ ἔργου conjectura jam assecutus" and in relation to bk. II, ch. XXIX, p. 325: "γράμματα ἑπτα ἐν δυσι ὁσκήτοις. Ita Mercerus jam legendum coniecit pro eo, quod est in Aldina πράγματα eamque lectionem in codicibus plurimis, Vaticano, ut docet Pierius Hierogl. XLVII". The relative passage in Valeriano is the following: "in quo advertendum, vulgatos Hori codices foede depravatos circumferri, qui πράγματα septem, non γράμματα habent. Cur vero nos Vaticanae bibliothecae codicem, in quo γράμματα ἑπτα non πράγματα scriptum est, castiorem judicaverimus". For the Vatican manuscript, see above ch. 2 nt. 4.

⁴ For the bronze statue of Hercules on the Campidoglio see for example, the dedication of Book LIII to Aloisius Priullus Patritius Venetus, in Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit.: "Heri, Priulle doctissime, cum veterum signa quaedam

the attention of specialists.⁴ But even those who are concerned with allegory during the Renaissance in its broadest sense – that is as a means to express concepts through pictures – should familiarize themselves with this work that is a primary source for such knowledge. In the commentaries and dedications there are reflected the different interests that the individuals whom Pierio had met during his life had expressed towards the hieroglyphs. Among those are numbered the advisers, protectors and patrons of artists who very often had an influence over the allegorical content of works of art. Therefore, in order to analyze to what extent the enthusiasm of Pierio for Egyptian wisdom could have been transmitted directly or indirectly to these artists, it is appropriate to reconstruct the progress of his studies for the *Hieroglyphica*.

☛ *The preliminary studies of Pierio Valeriano for the Hieroglyphica*

Arriving in Venice from Belluno in 1493 at the age of sixteen, Giovan Pietro delle Fosse, as nephew of Fra Urbano, had immediate access to the cultural circles of the city. His teachers were members of the Aldine Academy^{vi} and it was Sabellico who advised him to change his name in accordance with normal usage from Pietro to Pierio. I have already described how his uncle introduced him to Egyptian studies, in which Lascaris also encouraged him,^{vii} and how Pierio, enriched by such experiences, then moved to Padua close to Leonico Tomeo.⁵ It is estimated that from this time on Valeriano developed close relationships with the Venetian painters, relationships which he continued to maintain later in life. Perhaps also his contemporary, Titian, decided to depict rabbits and lambs, symbols of sensual love and innocence, in the background of his early masterpiece, that is the so-called *Sacred and Profane Love*,^{viii} thanks to the urging of the patrons of his contemporary Pierio. The fact that hunting and grazing are represented in the painting corresponds well to the need to give artistic form to a scholarly idea, and more generally to the natu-

^{vi} The Aldine Academy was only formally founded in 1500.

^{vii} In the dedication to Benedetto Agnello in Book XLVI of the *Hieroglyphica* Valeriano refers to Lascaris as “rarissimo”.

^{viii} Painted in 1513-14 and now in the Galleria Borghese in Rome. Rabbits were symbols of love at least from classical times. The rabbit does not appear in Horapollo but the symbolism of the hare for hearing is given in Horapollo I.16 and Plutarch's *Questioni Conviviali* IV, 5, 3,

singulari opere artificioque perfecta hic et illic inspecturi per urbem equitarem multisque praeteritis Capitolium demum inscendissemus, Herculis ibi signum summae nobilitatis ex aere conspectum est”; for a marble with inscriptions and images of Roman military insignia “apud Paulum Cardinalem Caesium”, see fol. 318^r; with respect to the Roman inscriptions at Ravenna, see fol. 272, 300^r; with respect to a gem from Agnello Colocci, see fol. 238^r. The opinion given by Winckelmann cit. on Valeriano is too hard and his prejudice against the treatment of hieroglyphs has ended by impeding a thorough study of the *Hieroglyphica*.

⁵ See above, pp. 204 ff.

ralism through which the Renaissance loved to depict hieroglyphs.⁶ It is likely that even the allegorical works of Giovanni Bellini might well have been influenced by contemporary hieroglyphic symbolism promoted amongst others by Fra Urbano and his nephew.^{ix} But this suggestion would require further research.

After attending the University of Padua and staying at Olivé near Verona and at Belluno, in 1509 Valeriano moved to Rome as a result of the war. It was here that he came across a large number of both complete hieroglyphs and also those of which so far he had only found faint traces. So then he engaged fully in this task, collecting texts for his *ιερογλυφικῶς* [hieroglyphically minded] friends, thus attracting the attention of the Prior General of the Augustinians, Giles of Viterbo,^x who as already indicated,⁷ had become increasingly interested in Pierio encouraging him to complete his proposed work, that is the *Aegyptica commentaria de rerum significationibus* [Egyptian commentary on the significance of things]. Thanks to this scholar, who was versed in oriental languages in particular in Hebrew and who had at the Lateran Council held his famous dialogue with Julius II, Valeriano came into contact with the nephew of the pontiff. So, after having served for a time as tutor for Bartolomeo della Rovere, he entered

^{ix} Giehlow is probably referring to the four small, beautiful paintings by Giovanni Bellini in the Galleria Accademia in Venice which can be seen at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Four_Allegories_by_Giovanni_Bellini (10/17/2012). They represent Perseverance, Fortune, Prudence and Falsehood respectively. None of these interpretations are derived from Horapollon. The representation of Fortune is particularly interesting since it shows her holding a ball in an unstable boat rather than the traditional depiction of her standing on a wheel or ball.

^x Giles of Viterbo (1469-1532) was a respected member of the Curia, a friend of Pico della Mirandola and Ficino and was particularly interested in Jewish texts and the Cabala. His oration at the Fifth General Council of 1512 can be read at *Oratio prima Synodi Lateranensis habita*, in Harduin *Acta Concil.* vol. ix. Paris, 1714, col. 1576.



Fig. 29 The Camel from Valeriano's *Hieroglyphica*.

⁶ Compare above all the illustrations in the later French editions of the Horapollon which depict the hieroglyphs placed in the midst of a landscape often grouped in genre scenes.

the service of Giovan Francesco della Rovere, bishop of Turin and prefect of Castel Sant'Angelo. Thanks to a poem composed for Giovan Francesco, in which he praised the Christian religion – *Johatas rotatus* – he also became personally known to Julius II.⁸

During this period the pope vigorously proceeded with the construction of his own mausoleum for which Michelangelo had made the first plans. It is likely that the latter, despite the multiplicity of his interests, made use of the suggestions of other scholars for the allegorical decoration of the work. During meetings with Egidio da Viterbo, Pierio had tried to explain the problem of Moses' horns on the basis of Hebrew etymology. It is possible that Michelangelo had in mind something similar when he endowed the gigantic figure of the patriarch with similar attributes. The horns were in fact the equivalent of a crown, that is a sign of regal dignity.^{9, xi}

In spite of his highly placed acquaintances, Valeriano lived in

^{xi} Thus Giehlow translates Valeriano. But the depiction of Moses with horns, of which as Giehlow says the most famous example is the 1505 sculpture of Moses by Michelangelo for the tomb of Julius II, is a mistranslation by St. Jerome in the Vulgate for a Hebrew word meaning radiant.

⁷ See above, p. 179.

⁸ See Ticozzi cit., pp. 98 ff. The *Johatas rotatus* was printed in 1512 “apud Erculem et Stephanum socios”. The description of his hieroglyphic studies in Rome can be read in *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 338^v: “Postea vero, quam calamitosissimis totius Venetiae temporibus Romam me recepi, ubi locupletior mihi copia facta est hujusmodi rerum, quas alibi difficulter inveniebam; ibi vero tum publice tum privatim toto calathio suggerebantur, incubi alacrius in idem studium, quo me semper oblectaveram et ἱερογλυφικῶς plura ad amicos commentarla conscripsi”; and in fol. 123, writing on Egypt there is: “neque per te stetit, dummodo aequiora fuissent tempora, quin aliquod studiis meis otium aliquando compareretur, quo uno ego gravitatis et benevolentiae tuae praesidio sustentatae angusta illa omnia . . . pertuli. Quem vero non confirmasset frequentissimae illae adhortationes tuae, cum tanta me charitate complectere? . . . Poterone ego unquam dememinisse praeclarissimae illius concionis tuae, quam frequentissimo totiusne Urbis, an orbis dicam, consessu, tantae vir autoritatis habuisti, ubi cum e re nata quaedam aetatis nostrae lumina laudibus in coelum extulisses, quae tua de me quoque specula, quae praedicatio fuerit, Roma (scimus, quanta huic nomini vis) tunc novit universa. . . Hinc factum, ut lucubrationes aliquot alias, tum in primis Aegyptiaca illa commentarla de rerum significationibus tot annorum vigilias . . . in eam demum speciem informarim, ut conspici nulla jam meo, quamvis maxime verecundi, rubore posse confidam”. On the drafting of this letter to Egidio during his Florentine stay, see below p. 218.

⁹ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit. In the commentary dedicated to Bocchi (De iis, quae ex sacris per cervum significantur Aegyptiorum literis), fol. 56^v: “Hinc aliud nascitur hieroglyphicum, ut sacrosancta dignitas ex uno quoque cornu significetur, quod antiquissima omnis veterum indicat disciplina . . . In divinis siquidem libris cornu passim pro regia positum reperimus complexaque similitudine quadam inter se cornu, radium et corona. Inde Moses cornibus insignis effingitur, cujus facies divini solis lumine correpta, radiis quibusdam igneis promicare videbatur, adeo, ut Israeliticus populus, cum splendorem eum ferre non posset, oculis ad obtutum caecutientibus, ab eo, ut velata facie verba faceret, studiosissime contenderunt. Eadem porro dictio apud Hebraeos et cornu et coronam denotat”; later, fol. 304^v, the argument is repeated.

poverty, so he accepted assignments from foreign clients. We have previously mentioned the rejection of the offer of advancement by Banissi¹⁰ to join the Chancellery of Maximilian. Later Pierio agreed to describe the splendid entrance to Rome of Mathäus Lang^{xii} which took place November 4, 1512 and, just in the same month, he wrote a letter to Pietro Crispo, secretary of Lorenzo Campeggio and Apostolic Legate to the imperial court,¹¹ in which he said that one of his first treatises on hieroglyphs, which he had lent to Alberto Pio da Carpi, had been stolen from the latter's desk and ended up in Germany. This must have happened before Carpi was occupied by imperial troops, that is, prior to the resignation of Pio as imperial ambassador.¹²

xii Cardinal Lang was at the time the representative of the Emperor, Maximilian I.

¹⁰ See p. 179 above

¹¹ The edition preserved in the Library of the Court in Vienna and entitled "Pierii Valeriani de honoribus illustrissimo et reverendissimo Gurcensi Caesareo totius Italiae vicario urbem ingredienti habitis epistola" came out in February 1513 at M. Schurer in Strasbourg. Along with the text of Valeriano there was a panegyric of Jan. Fran. Vitalis Panormius on Mathäus Lang and a speech by Count Hieronymus Nogarolus held in Vicenza in the presence of Emperor Maximilian I, who, after having unsuccessfully besieged Padua - "ob instantem brumam coactus" - was about to return to Germany. The Rhena-nus writes in the preface that Bergmann von Olpe had delivered the letter of Valeriano with the mandate to publish "alicui eorum, qui stanneis calamis libros exscriberent per mille exempla". On this occasion the characteristic claim was made against Maximilian and his planned trip to Rome: "Ceterum hinc facile conjicere possis, si Christianissimus imperator Maximilianus ipse Romam venerit, quot illum poetae suis poematibus certatim essent celebraturi". Valeriano wrote his letter at Castel Sant'Angelo" apud Jo. Franc. Roboreum, praefectum, VII Id Novembris 1512"; Vitalis wrote his eulogy "tertio Idus Novembris 1512".

¹² On the theft of the commentary on the vulture see the dedication "ad Cornelium Musaeum, Praesulem Bitontinum" in Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol 130: "Interrogasti me, quanam illa sit vultur mea, quam libris editis Germani quidam ex Horo Niliaco a me latinam factam divulgarent sedenim scias, me olim Romae dedisse eam videndam clarissimo Alberto Pio Carporum principi eruditissimo, verum ex ejus scrinio una cum aliquot aliis hujus notae scriptis a nescio quo laborum alienorum suppressore ablatam et in Germaniam asportatam. Cujus indicium est, quod docti quidam viri, cum opusculum id legissent, Hori esse arbitrati, scriptis prodidere, Horum Apollinem de sacris Aegyptiorum literis a Jo. Petro Valeriano latinum factum. Joannis autem Petri mihi est peculiare nomen, priusquam M. Ant. Sabellicus, praeceptor meus, id Venetiis in Pierium immutasset. Sed Horus Apollo a me non est conversus, frequenter vero in scriptis hujusmodi citatus: argumenti enim hujus alios etiam autores eosque multos habui". However it has not been possible to find any other information about this theft. Valeriano remarks on it also in his commentary on the scarab, *ibid.*, fol. 61^v: "atque haec de scarabeo, quae memoria complecti potui, succurrerunt, plura omnino scripturus, nisi commentarium, quod eo super olim paraveram vulturi adjunctum, ex clarissimi viri Alberti Pii Carporum Comitum scrinio susceptum et a nescio quo bibliotapho vel fuco potius in Germaniam asportatum adhuc desiderarem".

For Valeriano also, like most writers, the pontificate of Leo X was a splendid period. His great poetic and literary skills won him a title and a pension, while the Cardinal Giulio de Medici appointed him secretary. On the advice of Schomberg he became the tutor of the young Ippolito Medici¹³ and although he was fully absorbed by all these commitments, he nevertheless found the time to devote to his beloved study of hieroglyphs. Of course, even in Rome there were skeptics who did not see the purpose of interpreting Egyptian hieroglyphics and, as true humanists, tried to persuade Valeriano to comment on the classics. To such people Pierio would extol the attractions of hieroglyphics and reply: “Sed quid agerem, sed quando mihi temporis aliquid ab officiis vacuum relinquebatur? Luderemne alea? Auto latrunculis? . . . Atqui haec mihi alea cordi semper et pila fuit, haec venatio, haec confabulatio mea; invitum neminem ad lectionem traho, mihi ipsi lusi, invidia nulla sit, si unusquisque noverit ire via”. [But what should I do when I have some time left over from business affairs? Play at gambling? Or try theft?, . . . And for me, dice, and games has been always to my liking, and so is this research, this discussion; I make no one read against his will; I amuse myself, and there should be no envy if you choose a path that everyone is aware of].¹⁴

Among the skeptics it seems there was also the shrewd Raffael Maffei, called Volterrano, who in his *Commentaria Urbana* dedicated to Julius II, defines hieroglyphs as “nondum adhuc comperta” [not yet deciphered]. Among the greatest admirers of Valeriano, to whom Pierio would later dedicate some of the *Commentarii*¹⁵

¹³ For this see the dedication to Schomberg, *ibid.*, fol. 318v: “autor fueris, ut illustri adolescens Hippolytus, quem a summo Pontefice, ejus patruo, mihi regendum instituendumque mandari procuraveras, me tandem egere vetuerit”.

¹⁴ See the commentary *De iis, quae per sacrum suum significantur, ex sacris Aegyptiorum literis*, fol. 66: “quid enim (dicent nasuti plerique viri) sibi vult aulicus vir iste cum commentariis de sacris Aegyptiorum literis? quasi non satis sit ad multarum rerum elegantem declarationem Tullius, ad eruditionem Plinius et Plutarchus, ad scientiam Plato vel Aristoteles totque alii Graeci atque latini scriptores, qui nihil intactum reliquerunt, quibus legendis aetas nulla quantumvis longa sufficiat”; with similar words *ibid.*, fol. 50^v.

¹⁵ See also the *Commentariorum urbanorum libri 38* by Raffael Maffei of Volterra (eds. Basileae cit., fol. 382^v) dedicated to Julius II: “Aegyptii vero et Aethiopes quamvis antiquissimi; alteri (scribunt) tamen figuris animalium aliarumque rerum verius, quam literis, quas hieroglyphica vocant, nulli adhuc comperta”; elsewhere, the author provides information on the dual system of writing of the Egyptians following the remarks of Diodorus, who also gives the assertion of Herodotus about writing from right to left. In respect of this unusual direction of the writing he expresses the following opinion: “haec Aegyptios ab eis (Judaeis) mutuatos fuisse, dum simul quandoque viverent”. For the other Maffei, see Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fols. 102, 111 and 117.

were Bernardino,^{xiii} Mario^{xiv} and Achille Maffei as well as the majority of the Accademia Romana^{xv} which had flourished anew under Leo X. If we compare its members with those that Valeriano honored in his dedications, we note that the most important of these not only approved of the academic field of study in which he had embarked, but even tried to confirm all his choices. Thus during the debates about the significance of newly excavated statues, the advice of Pierio was asked, his analysis of the hieroglyphs was a topic of discussion sometimes serious, sometimes humorous, while during some funerary obsequies they resorted to him for a recommendation of the most appropriate hieroglyphic flower to adopt. Whenever a question was raised not just about an obscure symbol, an attribute or even a mysterious allegory but just simply as to the attitude to be adopted towards some figurative work, that is when it was necessary to find a symbolic image from some profound subject to embellish a speech or a picture, they turned to Pierio, to his enormous knowledge of hieroglyphics or what was presumed to be such. Valeriano knew how to please everyone. Personalities such as Colocci, Sadoletto, Grana, Mellini, as well as Giles of Viterbo, encouraged him to pursue his research, a fact which Pierio would not forget, honoring his patrons and friends in his work. The knowledge of Giovio who, as a chronicler had obtained the favor of Leo X, had a particularly importance for the allegory of the Renaissance. His analysis of hieroglyphs in fact stimulated Valeriano to investigate mottos and devices¹⁶ and the text of Giovio's *De Piscibus Romanis* helped him in this regard.^{17,xvi}

Here again the question arises whether this intellectual trend found an echo in works of art of the time. It would be reasonable to say yes. Pierio frequented the house of Raphael himself and there he saw an ancient marble statue representing an energetic-looking old man holding in one hand a book, while the other was relaxed and open. Pierio supposed that the interpretation of the gesture and the book was a hieroglyph and since on the base of the sculpture you could read the name of Philemon he had no doubt that the statue represented the Greek playwright who, as he said, was reputed to have been very miserly.¹⁸

¹⁶ See below (p. 236) the section dedicated to the emblems of Alciato and the devices of Giovio.

¹⁷ See the commentary of Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit, on Giovio, *De iis, quae per aliquot piscium genera significantur, ex sacris Aegyptiorum literis*, fol. 212. The treatise of Giovio was published in Rome only in 1524.

¹⁸ See the commentary *Ad Marcum Mantoum*, Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 352^r; at the end of text is inserted a discussion of the book as a hieroglyph for "antiquitas" according to Horapollon, II.27. Valeriano expresses it as

^{xiii} Cardinal Bernardino Maffei (1514-1549) was a poet and collector of antiquities.

^{xiv} Mario and Achille Maffei, two brothers, are the dedicatees of *Hieroglyphica* vol. 1, bk.s 16 and 15 respectively.

^{xv} The Accademia Romana of Pomponio Leto existed in two periods before and after his imprisonment for suspected heresy. Amongst the membership of the Prima Accademia was another Maffei, Agustino Maffei; see *Repertorium Pomponianum*: www.repertoriumpomponianum.it/pomponiani/maffei_agostino.htm, (6/10/2012).

^{xvi} Published by Calvo in Rome in 1524 with an Italian edition published in 1560. The commentary on fishes and the dedication to Giovio is in Book 30 in the *Hieroglyphica*. Giovio's book does not address any of the symbolic interpretations of fishes and apart from the fact that it is probably the earliest manual on the subject available to Valeriano after the classical authors, it is not easy to see what use it was since the book is not cited except in the dedication.

^{xvii} Raphael moved to Rome in 1508 and died in 1520. Philemon was a Greek playwright who flourished at the turn of the third century BCE.

It is unlikely that Valeriano would have thought of making public the interpretation that it was based on Horapollon and other authors unless he had the approval of his contemporaries and of Raphael himself.^{xvii} This fact should give pause. Indeed, it is very likely that a closer examination of several figurative works of the time would reveal an idea concealed in the decoration which could prove decisive for the interpretation of the same. We must therefore accept that wider research could reveal in such decoration of many works of the period a hidden idea that reflected the contents of the whole work. It might even be supposed that artists in general were constrained by a theme and only thanks to the extraordinary imagination and the brilliant representative capacity of the art of that time had they succeeded in hiding the constraints that had been imposed.

☛ *The birth of the Commentaries: the De sacris Aegyptiorum literis as part of the Hieroglyphica of Pierio Valeriano*^{xviii}

^{xviii} For bibliographic references to the publishing history of the *Hieroglyphica*, see Curran, 2007, cit., p. 367 nt. 5.

Passing into the service of Giulio de Medici, who after the death of Lorenzo was busy in the affairs of the Florentine Republic, from 1519 Valeriano lived between Rome and Florence. Three years later, as I mentioned above, he went to Belluno. There the Cardinal followed with great interest the study of hieroglyphics by his secretary to the point of asking which hieroglyphs could express his motto “aliorum pravitatem bonorum operum ope pervincendam” [Overcoming the impropriety of others with the power of good works]. Pierio suggested to him that it should be the white rose that Julian’s father was holding in his right hand in a portrait held in high regard by the family. Then he explained in a long text dedicated to the Cardinal, “ex sacris Aegyptiorum literis” [from the sacred Egyptian letters] the additional symbolic meanings attributed

follows: “ideo vero obsignatus liber, . . . quod in eo vel veteres sapientum disciplinae vel res gestae longae posteritatis memoriae commenduntur, atque ita liber, ut diceret Horatius, longum scriptori prorogat aevum. Stesichori poetae statuam senilem, incurvam, cum libro temporibus suis fuisse in Sicilia tradit Tullius Verrinis. Et nos Romae apud Raphaelem Urbinate marmoream Philemonis statuam validae senectutis vidimus, qui una manu volumen replicatum continebat, alteram ad mercedem operis passam porrigebat, de cuius avaritia in scriptis suis venundandis alibi meminimus”. The other passage is fol. 255: “Avaritiam et ille gestus in manu significat, cum exporrecta capedunculam assimilat, quo gestu Philemonis Romae signum vidi, cum in altera volumen complicatum haberet idque tenaciter restrictum, ut, qui precium sibi deposceret, non nisi eo numerato librum exhibiturus. Ferunt enim eum comoediarum scriptorem aere gravi solitum lucubrationes suas venundare. Inscriptio sane erat ΦΙΛΗΜΩΝ.

to the rose and other flowers that he commented on.¹⁹

Beginning in 1523 Valeriano enjoyed a period of greater prosperity and peace; on November 26, 1523 Giulio de Medici was elected Pope under the name of Clement VII and Pierio became the “cameriere secreto” [secret attendant]. In addition, he was appointed in Florence as the tutor of Ippolito, nephew of the pope.²⁰ During this time he could devote himself systematically to the categorization of the vast amount of material collected for his commentaries and partially used in the reporting of events of the time. He began to revise and to put into order, on the basis of a unified whole, all that he had found in ancient texts about anything that he thought concerned hieroglyphics, but also to discover new fields which further enriched his work. During that time the Medici Library was transferred back from Rome to Florence. In this way, as he himself writes in the *Hieroglyphica*, he was able to examine many more manuscripts of the *Horapollo*, and could spend whole days in Florence, where, being less burdened by commitments, he devoted himself assiduously to the study of the valuable works contained in that library.²¹

In addition to writing for his uncle and for Giulio de Medici as mentioned, Pierio wrote at this time a series of commentaries, in the dedications for which he expresses gratitude to his Roman patrons. Mindful of the “cene coriciane”, that is the ban-

¹⁹ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 399 on the image: “Animadverti siquidem in manu dextera imaginis ejus (Juliani), quam Florentiae magno in honore habetis, rosam candore niveo insignem adpictam quam pollice foliis superimposito continere videatur. Hoc est mihi breve et expeditum illud hieroglyphicum, quod quaeris, mala bonitatis ope superare”. This passage is important both for showing the survival of the custom deriving from the Middle Ages of including flowers in a symbolic portrait and for the hieroglyphic concepts of humanism.

²⁰ See the dedication to Joannes Antonius Pollio, fol. 440, where Valeriano mentions their stay together in Florence: “cum in eodem convivebamus contubernio, ad illem munus tecum a Clemente P. M. delegati, qui nepotes suos adolescentulos nobis commendaret”. Ippolito was the patron par excellence of Valeriano, see Schomberg in the dedication that we have already mentioned (p. 214 nt. 13), which reads: “unde factum, ut aliquando me mihi asserere et intermissa per tot annos studia repetere licuerit, quodque parturiebam opus absolvere demum sperem, quod omnium meritorum maximum semper appellabo”.

²¹ See *ibid.*, fol. 330: “Sed est omnino in damno libellus ille (Horus) tam in vulgatis Aldina impressione, quam etiam in manu scriptis exemplaribus, quorum nobis copia fuerit”, and fol. 101: “vitiis dissimulatorem per micturientem simiam suo loco significati diximus, quoniam ita in Hori codici suo impressis inveneramus, postea vero quam et manu scriptos codices et antiquos nacti sumus, non *πιθηκον* eo loco, sed *αἰλουρον* invenimus, quod quidem vero propius visum est”.

^{xix} For more on Goritz, see Julia Haig Gaisser, 'The Rise and Fall of Goritz's Feasts', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 1995, 1, pp. 44-57.

^{xx} The Latin for honey is "mel".

^{xxi} Dedicated in Valeriano's books 21, 23, 52 and 40 respectively. The dedications to Giovio and Schomberg are in books 30 and 43; those to Cursius, Mellini and Pollio in books 12, 26 and 56.

quets organized by Goritz,^{xix} in which Bembo, Sannazaro and Sadoletto had taken part, Valeriano asked Giles of Viterbo to show him which hieroglyph he wanted dedicated to him. Giles responded with a letter from Rome dated "1525, VII. Id Aprilis", which reflects the typical spirit of the time, asking Pierio, whom he honors with the title of restorer of ancient Egypt, to consider the hieroglyphs of the stork, the ibis, the crane and the hoopoe. To Cursius, organizer of the convivial reunions of Monte Citorio and also a member of the Roman Academy, Valeriano dedicated the hieroglyphs of the donkey, mule and camel, while he dedicated to Mellini that of the bee, in an allusion to his surname.^{xx} Pierio recalls the banquets that were held at the chancellery of the Senate and which were usually entertained by the reading of epigrams. Also in these years, Sadoletto, Colocci, Grana and Vitalis^{xxi} received the examples of dedications which Pierio offered them. Those to Giovio and Schomberg were written later, unless their titles, as bishop and cardinal respectively, were added after their appointments in 1528 and 1534.²²

In Florence, Valeriano met Michelangelo again. While the former was writing his work using the precious Medici Library, the artist was drawing up a project for the systemization of the library moving between the building and his drawing board. It

²² For the answer of Egidio da Viterbo see Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 123. Valeriano had asked him jokingly how he had contributed to the pleasures of Goritz' table: "Putes vero invitatum te ad Coricianas coenas, in quibus discumbent tecum Bembus, Sadoletus, Sanazarius". Giles retorts and reserves for himself the "columba" [the dove] if you cannot use the "ciconia", [the stork], "an animal that was special to him". However, it would take "ad Corytianas coenas, ubiquandoque quasi disgladiatum pugna plusquam Centaurea, sed velut in arcanum Corytium specum". Egidius praised Valeriano as "qui eodem temore Aegypti gloriam instaurat, quo Turca evertit". In respect of the banquets of Petrus Cursius, see fol. 87; for the feasts of Mellini see fol. 185: "Volatilium significationes, quas in aliquot digessimus commentarla, legisse te scribis . . ., in quibus et apem habere voluisses, quae, quod mellifica est, ad domus tuae gentile nomen cognationem quandem habere videatur. Proinde, si quam, ut superiori anno fecisti, aedium tuarum partem picturis ornare pares, habiturum te speras tui generis argumentum, quo literatorum oculis possis non inaniter oblectere". Valeriano acknowledges these wishes and adds: "Et plenus rimarum sum neque me cohibere possum, quin epigramma illud coenis nostris sodalitiis olim decontatum erumpat". See also the commentary dedicated to Sadoletto (*De Accipere*), fol. 151; that for Colucci (*De olor, luscini, psittaco et aliis avibus*), fol. 164; for Grana (*De funestis arboribus et coronis aliquot*), fol. 379^v – in which there is mentioned the funeral organized by the Roman Academy in honor of the young member Celso Mellini, who died in 1519, and was honored with "pervetusto majorum ritu"; for Janus Vitalis (*De vestibus*), where he alludes to his appointment as Count Palatine which occurred under Leo X as recognition for his poem *De Trinitate*, fol. 293; for Giovio, "Nucerinorum episcopus", fol. 212; for Schomberg, "Cardinalis Campanus", fol. 318^v.

would be interesting to know whether this closeness led to a rapprochement, because, although he was one of the most enthusiastic admirers of the artist, Valeriano did not feel himself any inferior to Michelangelo when it came to scholarship. Indeed, he was not even afraid to compare his work to that which the Florentine artist was planning for the Medici tomb.²³ It is possible that the increasing attraction of Michelangelo to symbols and allegories was due in part to this closeness. In fact common to both were acquaintances, such as Vittoria Colonna, to whom, after the death of her husband, Valeriano would dedicate the treatise on the hieroglyph of the dove, symbol of widowhood.^{xxii} In fact, according to Horapollon (bk. II ch. 23),^{xxiii} this is the meaning of the dove when it has black feathers.²⁴

Forced to flee from Florence in May 1527 along with Ippolito and Alessandro de Medici, Pierio travelled towards his home town bringing with it his dramatic impressions of the Sack of Rome. During the trip he visited his old friend Achille Bocchi in Bologna.^{25,xxiv} Then he stopped in Ferrara to see Calcagnini, whom he had met in Rome in 1512 when the latter was entrusted with the representation of the interests of his master at the papal court. In Ferrara; the two must have reviewed the newly published work of Horapollon, the translation of which Calcagnini was working on. But Pierio and Celio must also have discussed

^{xxii} Vittoria Colonna (1490-1547) was the first and most renowned Italian woman poet of her time. Her first book of poetry was published in 1538 and with this she started a popular trend. By the end of the sixteenth century more than 200 women poets had been published in Italy; see Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, Yale University Press, 2010. p. 172. Her husband, the Marchese of Pescara, died of wounds suffered at the battle of Pavia in 1525. Her dedication is in Book 22 of the *Hieroglyphica*.

^{xxiii} This is a slip. The correct reference is Horapollon II.32.

^{xxiv} Bocchi (1488-1562), a professor of law at the University of Bologna, was most famous for his early emblem book *Symbolicarum quaestionum de universo genere* published in Bologna in 1555 depicting emblems deriving from many different fields and disciplines.

²³ See *l'epistola nuncupatoria*, *ibid.*, fol. *3, where Valeriano likens his work as one still in progress to the "statuae illae mira Michaelis Angeli Bonaroti industria fabrefacta (in divi Laurentii templo) . . . nam est illis aliquid deest et hae extremam artificis desiderant manum".

²⁴ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 156 ff.

²⁵ On Bocchi see *ibid.*, fol. 51, where it refers primarily to a "studiorum similitudo, sive fortunae quaedam paritas, quod eodem tempore pari militia tibi Bononiae, mihi Romae easdem disciplinas profiteri contigerit"; for his stay in Bologna one reads: "tecum itaque totos illos dies esse, tecum ambulare, tecum sedere nunquam destiti, donec maximam ejus, quae me tum opprimerat, anxietatis partem a cervicibus meis excussisse mihi visus es . . . Postea vero, quam acerbitas illa temporum mitiorum versa est fortuna, elapsus e custodia pontifex, patriae Mediceae, Romae nos restituti mihiq[ue] res satis belle successere . . . Hippolyti enim mei liberalitate sum egere vetitus liberiusque mihi otium indultum est. Unde datus est ad literarum reditus et desertae diu Musae repetitae. In his autem ea prima fuit cura, ut, quae tractasse me olim nosti hieroglyphica, dilatius in situ esse minime permetterem. Accinxi me itaque ad poliendum eo tunc consilio, ut, si niveus doctorum amicorum calculus accessisset, modo hoc, modo illud commentarium emitterem". He intended therefore to start the commentary for Bocchi very shortly. The remark on fol. 56, that Duke Federigo of Mantua would have received as a gift in 1534 a "hippocervus" from Francis I, seems an afterthought, since Valeriano writes in the dedication: "Florentiae cum Mediceis ejectus" - that is in 1527 - "Bononiae te superiore aetate conveni".

the additional commentaries which in the meantime Valeriano was introducing into his own work. Furthermore, during their promenades and meals together Pierio must have spoken of his indecision whether or not to continue his research and perhaps Calcagnini urged him not to abandon his *Hieroglyphica*.

But when his student Ippolito was appointed cardinal, and Pierio became his secretary, the humanist scholar turned again to his beloved studies, devoting some commentaries to the friend who had so warmly welcomed him in such a difficult time. So Calcagnini got the commentary on the *cynocephalus* and the monkey,²⁶ Bocchi that relating to deer, and the doctor Joannes Manardus, the friend amongst all the scholars gathered together by Calcagnini that Pierio was closest to, that on the foot and hand.^{xxv} In this Valeriano jokingly alluded to the work and the name of Manardus: “a manum ardore appellatus” [so-called from the heat of his hand].²⁷

From the gratitude of Calcagnini it is clear that Valeriano had written the commentary dedicated to him immediately after he returned to Rome, that is between 1529 and 1530. This dating makes the observation posted at the end of this commentary particularly important. We read: “quatuor et viginti anni contexendis sex circiter et quinquaginta hujus argumenti commentariis perire” [and having been engaged in these commentaries for twenty-four years about fifty-six of the contents have been completed].²⁸ It confirms the development of sixteenth century studies on hieroglyphics described so far, since the implicit claim that Valeriano had begun his research between 1505 and 1506, that is immediately after the publication of the text of Horapollo, is the best demonstration of the extraordinary influence that this work had on humanism. It further shows that all the fifty-eight commen-

^{xxv} *Hieroglyphica* cit. Book 7 for Bocchi; Book 6 for Calcagnini; Book 35 for Manardus.

²⁶ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 45: “jucundissimum illud hospitium, quod mihi apud te per duas continuas hebdomadas Ferrariae fuit, effecit, ut ea omnia incommoda . . . inciperem oblivisci. Nam cum tu me Romana clade perterrefactum . . . otii tandem cupidum in patriam meme recipere festinantem jungere iter jussisses et apud te dies aliquot commorari, invitatis quotidie viris literatura praestantibus, magnam moerori meo consolationem adhibuisti . . . praecipue vero eruditissimo Manardo ilio tuo saepius vocato . . . Hinc factum, ut ego a vobis tali refectus cibo, cum primum ad Aegyptiaca mea commentaria datus est reditus, . . . statim cogitarim amicitiam tam honesta de causa olim vobiscum initam aliquo testimonio comprobare. Atque ita Cynocephali Aegyptiaci commentarium (id enim ob varietatem ipsam praecipue placuit) nomini tuo nuncupavi”.

²⁷ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 250, for the commentary dedicated to Manardus.

²⁸ See *ibid.*, fol. 50^v.

taries of the printed work, except two, had been developed during his stay in Florence. It had been a relatively quick task, which was aided by consulting the book left by his uncle that thus assumed a role of primary importance in his path of research.²⁹

☛ Pierio Valeriano's further work on the *Hieroglyphica* and its conclusion

From all this it can be concluded that, apart from the two commentaries missing in 1529, in the period after his return to Rome Valeriano devoted himself to improving what he had done up until then. This task was mainly to take care of the suggestions that Pierio had asked of those to whom he had sent the individual commentaries.³⁰ These additions certainly must have been accompanied by intense correspondence that, in addition to direct contact, would have helped to raise the awareness of contemporaries on the subject of hieroglyphics. The correspondence with the dignitaries of the Church, to whom most of the dedications are addressed, must thus have influenced the proliferation of those hieroglyphs that were based on symbols of biblical origin. This trend, which corresponds to the conservative spirit of the time, was accentuated when Valeriano began his ecclesiastical career. It can be argued that the hieroglyphs from the Bible were added later to those written with a humanist spirit. A case in point is the commentary dedicated to Cardinal Reginald Pole,^{xxvi} which gives the meanings of the olive, the vine and the fig tree. The reference to biblical passages fills two dense pages and altogether refers to no less than seventy-nine verses of the Psalms giving Pierio ample opportunity to discover hieroglyphs in them.³¹

Over time some of the dedications also underwent changes.

²⁹ See Ticozzi cit., p. 56, citing from the *Antiquities Bellunenses*: "opportune vero mihi prae manibus est patruī mei itinerarium"; this statement suggests that the drafting of the *Hieroglyphica* occurred in the same manner.

³⁰ See the dedications to Egidio, Bocchi and the introduction to the *Hieroglyphica*.

³¹ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., (*Locorum quorundam sacrae scripturae qui his passim exponuntur, index*) before the start of the first book. According to Ticozzi cit., p. 138, Valeriano became a priest around 1527. Regarding the commentary dedicated to Pole, see Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 384^v (written under Paul III). In fol. 391 is a passage that well characterizes the changing cultural climate during the Counter Reformation: "haec (geroglifici biblici) et huiusmodi pleraque commentationibus in hieroglyphica nostra libenter inseruimus, quo mihi sint aequiores ii, qui studium in hac re meum acrius incessunt, quorsum id tendat, ignavi, cum viderint similitudinariam hanc loquendi figuram non tantum ab Aegyptiis, quos immerito contra Dei praeceptum abominantur, inventam, verum etiam ab antiqua et nova lege receptam".

xxvi His dedication is contained in the *Hieroglyphica* cit. Book 53. Pole was the last Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury before he broke with Henry VIII and refused to endorse the latter's Grand Design to divorce Catherine of Aragon. He was made a Cardinal in 1537. Thus his title in the Dedication must have been added later as with Giovio and Schomberg; see above p. 218.

This was probably due to the need to obtain support for printing the work. Such was the case with the commentary on the lion, which, conceived for the first time in Florence for Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga, was later dedicated to the Duke Cosimo I as a patron of the research on hieroglyphics. Valeriano put this commentary as an introduction to his work.³² The same thing must also have occurred for the introduction to the second volume which referred to the hieroglyph of the head. Offered to Johann Jakob Fugger it was composed, like that for Cosimo, when the author began to think seriously about the publication of the work, which occurred in Basel in 1556 a few years before his death. From this we can say that the work on the *Hieroglyphica* occupied almost his entire life.³³



Fig. 30 The lion from Valeriano's *Hieroglyphica*

³² See *ibid.*, fol. 276: "Furnius tuus . . . proximis diebus, cum Romam advenisset, . . . impendio me rogavit, leonem meum illum Aegyptiacum, quern olim Amplitudini tuae dedicare cogitasset, sibi videndum traderem". Ippolito Medici thought of sending the commentary to Federigo Gonzaga together with a litter of lion cubs. However, since they were both females, neither the animals, nor the commentaries were then sent. An interest in natural history seems to accompany the study of hieroglyphs.

³³ Ticozzi *cit.*, p. 41, gives 1560 as the date of his death while Tiraboschi, *cit.*, vol. XX, p. 1169, followed by most commentators, indicates 1558.

But what about the circle who gathered around the tireless scholar after his return to Rome? In what environment did Valeriano spend the last few decades of his life? These questions should be given a brief response.

On the banks of the Tiber, Pierio had resumed contact with lovers of literature who fortunately had escaped the sack of the city. Precisely in response to this misfortune Valeriano wrote his touching dialogue on the unhappiness of literary men, in which there appear Mellini, Grana and Colocci, to whom a few years earlier he had dedicated commentaries where there was no hint of the impending disaster.³⁴ And what a contrast there is between this dialogue and the serenity of the humorous dedications to the earlier commentaries which are pervaded by the peace of mind of the author! Thanks to the patronage of the young Ippolito, Valeriano had at that time been able to lead a life free of worries. Until 1532 he lived in Rome at the Medici court, returning to his native Veneto when Ippolito was sent to Hungary.

Except for a journey to Rome in 1536-1537 following a call from Paul III, which perhaps he extended to Naples, Pierio did not henceforth cross the boundaries of the Venetian Republic, limiting himself to changing his home: first to Padua, and then to Belluno, Castiglione and Venice. Returning from Rome to his university town, he recorded his years of study making new relationships that he kept alive through occasional visits and correspondence. For a time he also gave scholarly lectures in the intellectual environment of which Castiglione was the leader. During his last decade he lived partly in Belluno and partly in Venice, where he loved to spend the winter to escape the harsh climate of his native city. In his last two years he moved finally to Padua.³⁵

In this last phase of his life Valeriano continued to maintain the relationships that, thanks to his uncle, he had initiated with the aristocracy of Venice. Many of his commentaries are dedicated to his colleagues. Particularly striking was his friendship with Giovanni Grimani, patriarch of Aquileia,^{xxvii} who was en-

xxvii *Hieroglyphica* cit., dedications: Patriarch of Aquileia: 27; Gerio: 31; Robertello: 36; Tomitano: 37; Passer: 39.

³⁴ See Valeriano, *De infelicitate literatorum* cit., and in this connection Burckhardt, *Die Cultur* cit., vol. I, p. 201.

³⁵ See Ticozzi cit., pp. 128 ff. The author does not mention Valeriano's journey to Naples attested by the passage in the *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 389v: "in agro Neapolitano, cum ad visendam ejus honoratissimae civitatis Academiam illo me contulissem". – The Paduan professors who received dedications are Francisco Robertello, Bernardo Tomitano and Antonio Passer. In Padua, Valeriano was very close to Cosmas Gerio see *ibid.*, fol. 217.

xxviii For Serlio, see *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture*, trans. V. Hart and P. Hicks, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996–2001. The original was published in 1584. For a biography, extensive bibliography and excerpts from his work see also Margaret Daly Davis, *Sebastiano Serlio* at http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/artdok/volltexte/2011/1352/pdf/Daly_Davis_Fontes57.pdf (6/12/2012). Serlio says that it was Marco Grimani, Patriarch of Aquileia (from 1529 to 1533), who took the measurements of the pyramid of Cheops. Marino Grimaldi returned as Patriarch for the second time from 1533 to 1545 and in a subsequent passage Serlio says it was in 1544 that the Patriarch assisted him in his researches in Jerusalem.

xxix See Mary D. Garrad “Art more powerful than Nature”?: Titian’s Motto reconsidered’, *The Cambridge Companion to Titian*, ed. P. Melman, Cambridge University Press, 2004.

xxx Painted in 1533 the portrait is now in the Galleria Palatina, Pitti Palace in Florence.

xxxi Giehlow probably intended to say Ruscelli in the note 38. Unfortunately Giehlow wrote little further about the theory of devices other than a couple of paragraphs in Chapter 7 below (pages 249 and 262). A device was a technical term describing a symbol similar to an emblem but containing only two elements: the motto and the picture. It was clearly derived from heraldic armorial bearings but unlike a coat of arms was personal to the owner and not heritable. Having only two elements rather than the three of the emblem and thus being more difficult to interpret it was regarded by contemporary theorists as more subtle than the emblem. For the citation for Giovio’s seminal work on the subject see ch. 7 nt. 60 below. There were many subsequent Italian treatises on the device including Ruscelli’s own *Le imprese illustre*, Venice: 1566.

riching the noted antiquarian collection of his uncle Dominic and who willingly listened to the expositions of Valeriano. His brother Marco [Grimani] also seems to have had the same interest that Pierio had cultivated in hieroglyphs. In fact, he took advantage of a stay in Cairo (in 1555) to make measurements and drawings of Egyptian antiquities that were later used by Sebastiano Serlio in his treatise on architecture.^{36,xxviii}

In addition to the lovers of art, were there not also painters? The symbol of the motto of Titian – “natura potentior ars” [Art is more powerful than nature]^{xxix} – comes from a hieroglyph of Horapollo, that is from the bear that “licking” their form gives shape to its own cubs.³⁷ It was Titian who portrayed Ippolito, the patron of Valeriano, when the former returned to Hungary.^{xxx} Perhaps on this or on other occasions Pierio was in contact with the famous artist. In addition, many of the obscure allegories, sought after especially by the younger Venetian school, may have been influenced by the culture of hieroglyphics which Pierio had been expounding. We must consider also that Dolce was closely linked to this artistic environment and had at the time a strong interest in the illustrations of the *imprese* as did indeed his rival Girolamo Ruscelli. And in this environment the influence of the studies of Pierio was highly significant.^{38,xxxi}

While Valeriano publicised his Egyptian studies, it seems that Girolamo Patavino, copying the hieroglyphs of the *Hypnerotomachia*, between 1540 and 1546 undertook the frescoes of Parentino in

³⁶ For Grimani see Tiraboschi cit., vol. XVII, p. 344, which refers to Marco Foscarini, *Della letteratura veneziana* vol. II, Padua 1752, p. 377. Foscarini also refers to a certain Pellegrino Broccardo who was involved with Egyptian inscriptions in Cairo in 1557. For the stay in Rome by Giovanni Grimani and the interpretation of a statue of Venus by Valeriano see above, p. 195.

³⁷ Reprinted in Ludovico Dolce, *Imprese nobili et ingenuosi di diversi principi et d'altri personaggi illustri nell'arme et nelle lettere*, Venetia 1583, for the previous editions, refer to the *Manuel du Librarie* of Brunet. The first part of this collection would have appeared in 1562, the second in 1566. On Dolce and his relations with Titian see *Dialogo sulla Pittura* issued by R. Eitelberger, Vienna 1871. According to Horapollo cit., II.83 “Orsa gravid”, bear with child, is the hieroglyph for “informem natum, qui ad formam revocetur posterius”. Fasanini translates this remark freely as follows: “haec enim suo in partu sanguinem primo conglobatum gignit. Postea vero concalectum hunc eundem propriis cruribus seu inguinibus fovet formatque ac lingua ipsa insuper magis ac magis lambens ad formam perfectam perducit”. This hieroglyph is also found on a German coin, see the reproduction in K. Domanig, ‘Peter Flötner als Plastiker und Medailleur’, *Jahrbuch der Sammlungen Kunsthistorischen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, XVI (1895), p. 69.

³⁸ See below the section dedicated to Giovio’s and Rucellai’s theory of “devices”.

³⁹ See above, pp. 134 ff.

Santa Giustina at Padua.³⁹ Even if the instructions given by the artistic committee established by Abbot Ignatius were crucial in this regard it was certainly Valeriano who drew attention to the Poliphilo. His praise of Colonna contributed to the diffusion of the *Hypnerotomachia* by again urging Manutius to prepare a new edition. That this happened in 1545, i.e. in the year in which Valeriano had stayed in Venice to edit a new edition of the Greek grammar written by his uncle, should not be considered a coincidence.⁴⁰

There may even have been direct contact between the commission of experts established by Abbot Ignatius and Pierio, a fact that would have made it possible for Valeriano to exert influence on their decisions. Pierio followed with great interest, however, the resumption of the frescoes of the monastery which were known everywhere for their decoration inspired by hieroglyphics. According to Girolamo da Potenza, a chronicler of Santa Giustina, there were continually painters from the Netherlands, Germany, England, France and Spain sketching the decorations.⁴¹

☛ *The role of Pierio Valeriano in the interpretation of the Hieroglyphica*

According to what has been said so far not surprisingly there was no attempt in the *Hieroglyphica* at a new interpretation of the Egyptian writing system. The importance of the work should rather be attributed to the systematic manner in which Pierio collates and sorts what was known about the Egyptian script. He is concerned, it is true, almost entirely with the hieroglyphic script of the priesthood and he overlooked the now celebrated passage of Clement of Alexandria, on the different types of Egyptian writing or he was not able to interpret it, in view of the fact that he says nothing about the distinction between the hieroglyphic, hieratic and demotic script or even about the literal value of the hieroglyphs, merely limiting him-

⁴⁰ See Ticozzi cit, pp. 63 ff. *Institutiones Graecae Grammaticae*, compiled by Fra Urbano and published for the first time in 1497 by Aldus, was reissued in 1512 by Tacuino to be republished in May 1545 by Valeriano "apud heredes Petri Raban et socios". The change of printer came then during the life of Aldus.

⁴¹ On the writing of the Chronicle, see above, p. 134 and the reproduction in Dorez, *Aldines Etudes II*. cit., pp. 263 ff., which the author provides, thanks to the description of Della Valle, who cites Girolamo as follows: "In many places in the Mantuan manuscript the author asserts that he saw with his own eyes Flemings, Germans, English, French and Spaniards study and draw many of these paintings with great diligence". Most of all they emphasized the hieroglyphs on the pillars and bas-reliefs.

⁴² See above, pp. 25 and 154. Only the successors of the humanists made use of the *Stromata*, see below.

self to comparing the latter, which he understood as just writing in images, to the popular phonetic writing.⁴²

With regard to the latter there is only a single mention. According to a statement by Plutarch that the first letter of the Egyptian alphabet had had the form of an ibis, Pierio assumed that the shape of the other characters – he supposed in all fifteen – could be based on images of animals or human limbs. He made the assumption which modern research has confirmed, that the demotic script derived its alphabet through a process of simplification from the images of the hieroglyphic script. The process of simplification, however, was unknown to Valeriano, who, apart from the occasional attempt at it, abandoned such a conjecture without getting any closer to it. The fact that such writing had become obsolete after its confirmation by the Greek author persuaded Valeriano to desist from further investigation. He never imagined that this brief annotation could contain one of the most fertile seeds for the interpretation of hieroglyphs. And in fact to this can be attributed the interest that prompted the attention given to Coptic script and then to the spoken language of ancient Egypt.⁴³

This brief reference to the demotic script must have blinded Valeriano in view of the fact that it did not promise any clarification of the secrets of that ancient wisdom which could only be contained in hieroglyphs handed down from father to son. The work to which Pierio devoted himself aimed at their interpretation. The method he followed did not deviate from that which

⁴³ The study of writing with Egyptian letters of whose existence the hieroglyph “juncus et atramentum” quoted by Horapollon also attests, is on fol. 351 of the *Hieroglyphica* of Valeriano: “Cujusmodi vero essent literarum characteres apud Aegyptios, si quaesierit quispiam, putarim ego partim instrumentorum aliquot, plurimum vero animalium effigies fuisse. Illud enim ex Plutarcho constat, Mercurium, qui primus literas Aegyptiis communicavit, Ibin primam esse literam voluisse. Refert quidem ea in ingressu triangularem effigiem, cruribus ita dispositis, ut suo loco dictum; et quae prima apud nos et Graecos litera est, ad isoscelis trianguli faciem accommodatur. Atque ita conicere possumus, reliquas quoque literas vel XV vel quotquot fuerint, aliquis animalis effigie membrove figuratas, quae tam longa inde annorum serie sint abolitae atque ab eo praesertim tempore, quo Ptolemaei Graecas literas in Aegyptum deduxere”. Valeriano goes on to speculate concerning the form of B, Γ and Δ. That the popular writing of the Egyptians occupied the minds of the men of the Renaissance is demonstrated by ms. 269 of the Library of the Viennese court deriving from the sixteenth century that embraces an “Alphabetum Egyptiorum” of 23 letters with the names and respective forms running from right to left. In this manuscript are also listed the Greek, Jewish, Turkish, Syrian, Chaldean, Arabic and Slavic alphabets, as well as excerpts from Valerianus Probus’ *De Notis antiquis*, and a copy of the Roman calendar with the dedications of Michael Fabricius Ferrarinus Regiensis to the patriars Albertinus Corrizius, Thomas Pynotus and Joannes Nicolaus Corrizius.

Alberti had already proposed, which Colonna had made his own, which had been espoused by Fra Urbano and was formulated, as we have seen, by Erasmus.⁴⁴ Valeriano confined himself solely to expanding the scope of symbolic images which at the time were thought could be defined as hieroglyphs and, since he believed like his master Sabellico, that the Jews had been disciples of the Egyptians, he did not hesitate even to include the caballa in his hieroglyphic research, which he studied following Reuchlin.⁴⁵

The massive documentation – just scroll down the list of writers and summaries of coins cited – was brought by Valeriano into a system, conspicuously absent in the heterogeneous collection of Horapollo. The system was organized in accordance with that introduced by Diodorus, according to which the hieroglyphs would follow the form of living things, then parts of the human body followed by objects in common use. This explains his particular arrangement according to which the human body is listed after animals and after the plants are objects, a system that Diodorus however had not used. His ambition to construct his entire representation on the basis of information on hieroglyphics handed down from ancient times is evident. Valeriano never forgot to introduce into his essays individual groups of images with a premise based on the interpretations found in the works of ancient authors, almost all starting with the hieroglyphic interpretations of Horapollo. He tried above all to copy or imitate the phraseology of the *Hieroglyphica* even in the case of the hieroglyphs derived from Greek, Roman and Hebraic symbols⁴⁶ and of course he gave his work the same title as the Horapollo.

⁴⁴ See above, pp. 62 ff., 94ff. and 121 ff.

⁴⁵ See the index of authors cited at the beginning of the *Hieroglyphica* cit. Amongst the Nordic humanists are included Erasmus, Jakob Ziegler and Joan. Reuchlin Phorcensis. Valeriano elsewhere demonstrates a high regard for German science, as revealed by his words on Hieronymus Wolf about Fugger, see *ibid.*, fol. 224.

⁴⁶ In this regard, there is the characteristic introduction to the hieroglyph "turtur", [turtle-dove] *ibid.*, fol. 161: "Parum Aegyptiis cognita turtur fuit, nisi plura super ea tradiderunt, quam legatur apud Horum. Sedenim minime verisimile est sacerdotes eos in universa rerum natura toto vitae tempore versatos non longe plura et paene innummera intellexisse . . . Sed quoniam doctrina haec prorsus extincta est, satis nobis fuerit, si, quando corpus ipsum ab inferis revocare non possumus, aliquam tamen rei umbram ob oculos exhibere, sive ab Aegyptiis, sive ab Hebraeis sive a Graecis aut Latinis ea tradita reperiantur". An example that illustrates how a new hieroglyph in the manner of Horapollo is described is on fol. 210^v "Hominem insuper, qui fugitivam rem aliquam nulla consequendi spe sectaretur, indicare, si vellent, anguillam pingebant, quam manus a cauda prehenderet". The explanation follows.

Immersed in his studies, the author came in the end to look at everything through an Egyptian lense so to speak, thus losing the ability to take a critical view whenever something did not fit his theories. This was a characteristic that could easily have been formed from the lessons learned from the works of Annius of Viterbo, who could not be censured because he called the sculptures of the column of Viterbo hieroglyphic, since he was paying the price of being the child of his age. But in the case of Pierio, he can be reproached for incorporating the fantasies of Annius into his work despite the fact that he knew of the criticisms of Sabellico and Crinito. The claim that Osiris would have driven the Giants from Italy, thus founding cities in Etruria, was too convenient a demonstration of his hieroglyphic perception of the entire symbolic system. For the same reason Valeriano calls Pythagoras a Tyrrhenian, thus explaining the preference that the Greek philosopher had for expressing himself in hieroglyphic formulas not so much on the basis of the journeys that he had made in Egypt, but because of their Egyptian origin.⁴⁷

In what followed he was more optimistic than his uncle about the success that he would finally have in the interpretation of hieroglyphs. Of course, Pierio was ready to admit some skepticism about the possibility of deciphering hieroglyphs to those who rebuked him for his assumption that almost all (emphasizing almost all) of the knowledge of ancient Egyptian was lost with the destruction of that kingdom⁴⁸ even if they expressed the hope that the little that remained of it would one day be enough to reconstruct it in its entirety. This resolute faith explains the tremendous perseverance with which he pursued his own interpretive synthesis of ancient symbolism. Valeriano did have enough sense to realize that he should interpret the entire

⁴⁷ For the collection of passages referring to the column of Osiris see above, p. 85. For the colonization of Etruria by the Egyptians, see Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 201: "Multa vero hujusmodi excogitata sunt a Pythagora, quia non solum originatone motus, quod multae olim in Etruria civitates ab Aegyptiis fundatae constitutaeque dicuntur, sed quod ipsos etiam Aegyptios adierit, a quibus sacri sermonis rationem, obscuritatem in loquendo symboli- cam et disciplinas alias reportavit".

⁴⁸ See the *Epistola nuncupatoria*, *ibid.*, fol. 3*. Skeptics argued that "hoc ipso tempore nullus quantum libet profunde eruditione sit, qui vel obeliscos, qui Roma aut alibi adhuc visuntur, vel admirandam illam Bembi mensam intelligat". To which Valeriano replied: "me non nescium esse plurima ex his una cum Aegyptiorum regno, doctrina, institutione ac fere omni eorum nomine . . . esse abolita . . . Sed esto non posse me . . . totum hoc sacrum perlustrare, idcircone preclaro et laborioso incepto desistendum?"

⁴⁹ Valeriano discusses only a few figures of the Bembine table; see above p. 182.

inscription of an obelisk or of the Bembine table.⁴⁹ And only in later times would anyone dare to engage in such acrobatics trusting in the apparent plausibility of the method that was adopted.

If we think of the curiosity shown by contemporaries in these enigmatic Egyptian inscriptions, Valeriano's approach towards hieroglyphic texts can only warrant a considerable amount of caution. Fully aware of the shortcomings of his work about the interpretation of the inscriptions on the obelisks, he feels impelled⁵⁰ to describe the benefits that could still be derived from the study of his *Hieroglyphica*. He reminds the reader that Pythagoras and Plato, "non temere ad Aegyptos doctrinae gratia", [did not ascribe freely to the doctrines of the Egyptians]; he recalls how, in the Old Testament, Moses, David and the prophets had used expressions which recalled the hieroglyphs; he does not hesitate even to refer to Christ himself: "In nova vero lege – he claims – cum Assertor ait, aperiam in parabolis os meum et in aenigmate antiqua loquar quid aliud vult sibi, quam hieroglyphice sermonem faciam et allegorice vetusta rerum proferam monumenta?" [In the new law, as our Savior says, I will open my mouth in a parable and speak in dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known,^{xxxii} and this I will do in hieroglyphs and I will construct ancient monuments of things in allegories]. Expressing the sense in hieroglyphs meant for Valeriano the same as "divinarum humanarumque, rerum naturam aperire", [to reveal the nature of things both human and divine] revealing thus for initiates the most obscure truths in a comprehensible form. An understanding of hieroglyphics had the added benefit of contributing to an understanding of the Scriptures thus reinforcing the true faith.

This emphasis on their utility for religious purposes appears several times in his work and can be explained by the fact previously mentioned, namely that Valeriano was editing it at a time when the Inquisition of Caraffa^{xxxiii} was active, even if we also take into consideration the mystical character of those humanists who were in the field. We must not overlook the fact that Ficino, a contemporary of Savonarola, had come to view the hieroglyphs as copies of the divine ideas. He also considered that to come to grips with the secret of the hieroglyphs required above all that "contemplatio rerum" [contemplation of things] postulated by Bonaventura as the first step towards enlighten-

^{xxxii} The first part of the quotation is from Psalm 78, 2 and 3 (Authorized Version).

^{xxxiii} In 1542 Cardinal Caraffa was named head of the newly established Roman Inquisition. Subsequently he became Pope Paul IV (1555 to 1559).

He also mentions the hieroglyphs on the obelisks, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 316^v: "Serra" [Saw] - probably the waterline -, fol. 287: "orbiculi", [ring], fol. 127: "ibis", fol. 239: "lingua manu recta" [a tongue in the right hand].

⁵⁰ See the final part of the *Epistola nuncupatoria* in the *Hieroglyphica* cit.

ment. It was rather common at that time even to believe that individual hieroglyphs, particularly those drawn from nature, might symbolize the divine.⁵¹

Another point stressed by Valeriano regarded the ethical meaning of hieroglyphic science, a pedagogical element that was self-evident for humanism. In the human characteristics that the Egyptians had perceived even in animals there was in fact an immediate point of contact with the famous warning of natural scientists of succeeding eras that in terms of morality man should not be reduced to the level of the beast but on the contrary should cultivate virtue.^{xxxiv} This is a clear marker of the poetic trend at the time of emphasizing edifying content. Pierio would not have been a true humanist if he had not wanted to transfer the results of his studies on hieroglyphics into a practical exercise for the visual arts. As we have said, what he really admired in the ancients was exactly “*arcanam illam pingendi caelandyque rationem*” [their secret purpose in painting and carving]. In the compilation of his essays he never lost sight of the goal of allowing the reader to express his own thoughts through images or, as he writes, “*hieroglyphica sive Aegyptiorum in morem scribere*” [hieroglyphics or script in the manner of the Egyptians].⁵²

☛ *Pierio Valeriano's theory on hieroglyphic writing.*

Such aspirations coincided with the wishes of Pierio's friends. Some of his essays were written at their request in order that Valeriano might provide a hieroglyph suitable to illustrate a particular concept. After having had part of his own home decorated, Mellini for example, in order to illustrate his household, wanted to obtain hieroglyphic material from Pierio with which to continue his decoration and “*literatorum oculos non inaniter oblectare*” [delight the eyes of the learned in some unostentatious manner], while Cardinal Giulio de Medici asked Pierio to find a way that it might be possible to express his motto in a hieroglyphic “*monosyllabum*” [monosyllable].⁵³ Based on these requests Valeriano claimed to have undertaken his work for the benefit of those who delighted in images⁵⁴ the purpose of which

xxxiv This remark is a reference to the contemporary debate as to whether man or animal were morally superior. Some said that since animals had no free will they were not subject to the stigma of the Fall. St. Augustine took the more practical view that humanity was superior in ethical matters. Here Giehlow makes two separate important points in successive sentences which could have been further elaborated. Humans are or should be ethically superior to animals. That art and poetry was becoming increasingly harnessed to expressing the morally useful rather than the “delight” (or indeed the spiritual) which was the other half of Horace's famous dictum as to the purpose of art.

⁵¹ See the section devoted to Marsilio Ficino, pp. 47 ff. above.

⁵² Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 398^v: “*amicitiam modis plurimis hieroglyphice pingi sculpiue posse tote opere diximus . . . Siquis igitur fructiferam amicitiam Aegyptiorum in morem scribere voluerit, apte coronam myrteam malis Punicis ornatam faciet*”.

⁵³ See above, p. 211.

⁵⁴ See Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit, fol. 23: “*quia totus hic noster labor ad eorum usum susceptus est qui pictura delectantur*”.

was to project onto the allegories of succeeding eras the continued influence of the humanistic study of hieroglyphics.

The first thing that Valeriano demanded of a hieroglyph was that it should be easily representable. Of course, when it derived from a classical source it could not necessarily be subjected to this requirement, although even so it might still be just possible to depict it. The extract from *Horapollo* which states that the Egyptians would have rendered the horoscope with the hieroglyph of a “*homo horas edens*” [a man eating the hours], presented particular difficulties. Unlike the naive interpretation of Dürer and the illustrator of the French *Horapollo*, Valeriano creates a hieroglyph with the image of a man who puts to his mouth a rose, some lavender and an apple that is products of the three seasons in which the Egyptians subdivided the year⁵⁵ An allegory of this nature, the meaning of which can hardly be understood without an explanation, allows us to appreciate the full measure of wit that could be concealed in similar allegorical representations of the time.

Although he uses the symbols of literary works for hieroglyphs, Valeriano remains faithful to its principle, by which – as he himself says in writing to Giovio – “*ea de causa hieroglyphica haec conscripta sunt ut eorum* (that is those who were interested in hieroglyphs) *quis uti posset imaginibus*”. [The reason why these hieroglyphs were written was for those who could use them as images]. Accordingly, he was for a long time uncertain whether or not to include in his work an exposition of the hieroglyphic meaning of various species of fish, since he lacked an objective comparison for the ancient names which he had found. It was only thanks to the work of Giovio through which it was possible to identify these names with examples from the ancient fish market that Pierio came to believe that even these hieroglyphs could be used for figurative purposes.⁵⁶

Valeriano said that the hieroglyph, as well as having to be adapted to the representation, must have, as a distinctive characteristic, a particular feature of the thing it represented, that is the hieroglyph must contain “*certam rei rationem*” [some reference to the object]. This expression, adopted by Rinieri on the

⁵⁵ See *ibid.*, fol. 241: “*Hujus modi vero horarum pastum commode forte exprimere poterimus, si ex unius cujusque horae proventibus aliquid decerpserimus, puta rosas, spicam et pomum aliquod, quae in unum fasciculum colligata, ori adaptato admoveantur*”. This is followed by the explanations of the three seasons in Egypt, which correspond to these products.

⁵⁶ See above, ch. 6 nt. 17.

xxxv Curran, 2007, p. 73 points out the paradox not to say contradiction of treating the hieroglyphs as a language of universal validity (a view of most contemporaries) and treating them as symbols the purpose of which was to conceal priestly secrets and wisdom.

occasion of the conversation with Fra Urbano referred to above, is then clarified by Valeriano, who writes that the Egyptians “*ab eis, quae in uno quoque genere reliquorum naturam aut mores excederent, significationum suarum argumentum desumebant*”. [(from them), who at least in one way surpassing all others in nature or custom, chose the significance of their texts].⁵⁷ The author condemns the distractions represented by those enigmatic figured homonyms in favor of the unequivocal nature of the hieroglyph. Valeriano was in this way making progress towards his goal of giving art an image language of universal validity,^{xxxv} even though his treatment of the hieroglyphs represented in fact a symbol of his personal failure in this respect. The multiple obscurities between sign and meaning, found particularly in the Horapollon, favored the use of symbolic images which were increasingly distant from the objects depicted. It aimed at achieving its objective with an even greater intellectual sophistry than had been used by the Egyptians. To this was added the dogmatic power exerted by the meanings given by the ancient sources by which the same thing came to mean as much a virtue as a vice, in short, to be the symbol of anything at all. In most cases therefore it is only from the context that it was possible to guess the meaning of the image.

In his search for possible hieroglyphs, Pierio did not limit himself, however, to the vast reservoir of ancient writers and of the Fathers of the Church; he even made use of the hieroglyphic creations of his contemporaries. Just referring to Bocchi, the author admits that he absolutely would not hesitate “*juniorum hieroglyphica quaedam argumenta passim referre, utut deposcere locus videatur*”. [to propose when necessary a meaning for the hieroglyphs of the moderns as the context requires].⁵⁸ But however he does this rarely since he strives above all to base his references on classical tradition.

Valeriano came to believe in this kind of freedom of choice

⁵⁷ See above, p. 204 and Valeriano, *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 237. According to Rinieri the eyes in an ear, or even between individual fingers in a dream would mean blindness. He makes this observation during a discussion of the onirocriti [dream interpretations] saying, “*quae quidem commenta cum mecum . . . reputare coepi, Aegyptiorum inventis tam similia esse conspicio, ut inter hieroglyphica non immerito locum habere posse videantur, quod et pictura commode possunt exprimi et certam rei rationem suscipiunt*”. The most comprehensive innovation is in fol. 179^v. Especially in the case of new inventions from an observation of nature - “*observatione inventa*” - Valeriano is closely linked to such a nexus. But when he has evidence of classical information, this principle is negated. Conversely, it led to an autonomous study of nature.

⁵⁸ See *ibid.*, fol. 54^v.

thanks to his study of the *Hypnerotomachia* of Francesco Colonna. Most of the newly formed hieroglyphs, found with the phrase, “sunt qui” [those who (were before us)^{xxxvi}] or directly cited as “juniorum inventa” [created by more modern authors] derive just from this work⁵⁹ which again underlines the extraordinary importance of the studies of Colonna. Only when he could not find a corresponding hieroglyphic interpretation in any ancient author did he propose some arbitrary symbol, which he then generally characterized as “non infelicer” [not unhappily] conceived.

^{xxxvi} Most likely short for “ubi sunt qui ante nos fuerunt”.

Studying the *Hypnerotomachia*, Valeriano, like Erasmus, apparently assumed that Colonna had drawn from other sources of hieroglyphs hitherto unknown. But his opinion does not become the less favorable when he doubts the actual existence of an ancient source, or even when it comes to defining a particular glyph as a “novum commentum” [new comment]. And he even shows particular admiration when, for example, he emphasizes the consistency of the hieroglyph “platina expensa” [a large dish] to symbolize “liberalitas”, [liberality] for here an analogy resonates exactly with the Egyptian “calathus” [basket: a symbol of fruitfulness]. Valeriano explores the hieroglyphic creations of Colonna down into the details which serve him as models and in his commentaries he tries to give an example of how to write with hieroglyphs. Of course he does not refer either to Colonna or the title of the latter’s work any time that he refers to newly created hieroglyphics.

So as to demonstrate through his work a figurative language in an artistic environment, Valeriano in his *Hieroglyphica* even presents to art lovers – in addition to mystical Egyptian examples – historical models that best illustrate ideas expressed in hieroglyphic language. He combines the ethical meanings of the hieroglyphics with whatever he can find as examples from history, not in order to enliven his narrative but because he is thinking of the visual arts. Any doubt about this is dispelled

⁵⁹ See above, pp. 108 ff., for the passages of the *Hieroglyphica* cited that relate to the hieroglyphs of Colonna. A hieroglyph that Valeriano especially admires in the *Hypnerotomachia* is that which renders “concordiae discordiaeque effectus”; see above, p. 107. He even proposes to eliminate the signs of fire and water and leave only the caduceus between the elephant issuing from the ant and which is reduced back into the ant, because then the image becomes a hieroglyph for “perfectus intellectus, quippe qui minimorum aequae ac maximorum cognitionem sit optime consecutus omniumque unam quasi scientiam conjunxerit”. to which is then added the excuse: “sed enim interpretamentum hoc perinde ac illud arbitrium esse non inficior”.

when, referring to the bull in the hieroglyph of “temperantia” (Horapollo, 1.46), one reads: “Exempla vero hujusmodi ea de causa nonnunquam interserimus, . . . ut (qui pictura delectantur) praeter Aegyptiaca et alia pleraque mystica historiam etiam habeant, quam ad id, quod elegerint argumentum, accommodare possint”. [Examples like this are the reason why we sometimes insert things, . . . so that (those who enjoy images) have also a history of the greater part of the mysteries of the Egyptians and others which they can adapt to whatever meaning they choose].⁶⁰

Clearly Pierio believed that these allegorical stories represented the predominate images while the hieroglyphs affixed to the pilasters or the adjoining walls had a narrative function as was the case at Santa Giustina in Padua and in the frescoes from the time of Abbot Gasparo. Such for example, was the scene that illustrates the example of the arrival in Rome of St. Benedict which is surrounded by a frame with related hieroglyphs.

It has already been said before that we believe it plausible that the choice of subjects for such decorations comes from a familiarity with the work of Colonna.⁶¹ If Valeriano had recommended artists to connect historical and allegorical representations to hieroglyphic symbols, there would then be further proof of the influence of the *Hypnerotomachia*. In any case, the influence is so clear that – just emphasizing the most obvious elements – we tend to argue that Colonna had the same importance for Valeriano as Horapollo had on the author of the *Hypnerotomachia*.

The genesis of the *Hieroglyphica* indicates clearly how time after time both Horapollo and Colonna had a simultaneous impact on humanistic research on hieroglyphics, and that this dual influence had been extended to Renaissance allegory in general as the sources always coveted by scholars were reviewed.

If we believe that in the *Hypnerotomachia* the main features of emblematics are clearly evident and that they are strongly and unilaterally emphasized in Valeriano’s *Hieroglyphica*, it is no wonder that this famous poet comes to mind as a potential translator into verse of the description of the hieroglyphics by Horapollo and Colonna. Perhaps the desire to provide an exhaustive compendium on contemporary hieroglyphic wisdom kept him from undertaking such an extensive task.

⁶⁰ See Valeriano *Hieroglyphica* cit., fol. 23.

⁶¹ See above, pp. 133 ff. The chronicler of Santa Giustina, Girolamo da Pontenza, repeatedly cited above, describes the extensive use of Valeriano’s *Hieroglyphica* for the interpretation of the frescoes.

This belief is confirmed by his attitude towards the need generally felt for a translation of Horapollo. To this undertaking he could contribute his philological knowledge and his interest in hieroglyphics that was equalled by scarcely any other humanist. In addition, he also owned a copy of the text and it is likely that he would have immediately attempted it just to have extracts available for use. But Pierio could not decide to publish it in full. The hope of achieving a more satisfying text by comparing his with other better manuscripts and the genuine scientific dissatisfaction with the corrupt texts that characterized him, made him hesitate. Also, once the fundamental work of his life had been completed more than forty years had elapsed since other scholars had succumbed to the pressures of his contemporaries for the translation of the Horapollo.

Valeriano's attitude to this delay of his translation is similar to that of his friend Calcagnini who had dedicated himself very early to a version of the text by Horapollo which had struck him so forcibly. Even the anonymous author who was responsible for the Neapolitan Latin translation of the *Hieroglyphica* must have confronted such difficulties.^{xxxvii} It is a fact that Valeriano preferred at first to publicize his work through individual commentaries so as to make the most of the opinions of friends when it came to revising his work.

^{xxxvii} For this manuscript, see above ch. 2 nt. 26.

CHAPTER 7

¶ THE HIEROGLYPHIC ORIGINS OF THE EMBLEMATA OF ALCIATO

☛ *The Hieroglyphic Studies in Bologna and the translation of the Horapollo by Filippo Fasanini*

It was the wish of the scholars of Bologna to give themselves a name by translating the Greek text of the Horapollo edited by Aldus. But the Latin version of the text put them in a dilemma: on the one hand they were confident that the translation would bring them celebrity, on the other, they feared that such a long commitment would end up creating a conflict between their ambition and their scholarly conscientiousness. The miscellaneous volume published by Manutius which included the Horapollo had come to Bologna in the very year of its publication. This is apparent from the prologue that Fasanini, then active in this city, includes with his translation of the treatise of Palaephatus *περὶ τῶν ἀπίστων ἱστορίων* [On unbelievable tales] published in 1515 which confirms that the text was part of the miscellaneous volume edited by Aldus which at that moment had been in his hands for ten years.¹

Only after completing the translation of Palaephatus, did Fasanini readily devote himself to preparing a Latin version of the Horapollo for the press.² He thought it appropriate first to

¹ The translation of the Palaephatus of Fasanini bears the colophon "Impressum Bononiae per Benedictum Hectoris Bononiensis Idibus Aprilis 1515". The address to the reader reads, "paucula haec (the fragments of Palaephatus), quae ad manus nostras jam decem anni sunt, opera Aldi Manutii pervenerunt". The time period is a bit too long, because the Aldine edition appeared in October of 1505; see above, p. 187. G. Fantuzzi devotes a lot of space to Fasanini in his *Notizie degli scrittori*, Bologna, 1781-1783, vol. III, p. 300. On this is based Serafino Mazzetti's *Repertorio di tutti i professori antichi e moderni della famosa Università e del celebre istituto delle scienze di Bologna*, Bologna 1847, p. 122.

² The title of the Horapollo edited by Fasanini is as follows: *Hori Apollinis Niliaci Hieroglyphica hoc est de sacris Aegyptiorum literis libelli duo de Graeco in Latinum sermonem a Philippo Phasianino Bononiensi nunc primum translate*. The dedication follows: "Ad amplissimum antistitem et dominum D. Laurentium Campegium titulli S. Thomae in Perione Apostolicae Sedis Cardinalem Meritissimum Philippi Phasianini Bononiensis epistola", in which he announced that the imminent arrival of the new cardinal was expected in Bologna. Since Campeggio was appointed cardinal on June 26, 1517 and arrived in Bologna on November 29, 1517 - see Fantuzzi cit., vol. III, pp. 47 ff. - the completion of the printing must lie in the interim period, while at the beginning of the *errata*, we read: "impressum Bononiae apud Hieronymum Platonidem Bibliopolam solertissimum incarnationis Dominicae MDXVII". After this list there is an analytical index and a poem in endecasyllable [eleven

examine other better manuscripts and he admits that he began the task only after having received the promise of getting an ancient and more trustworthy exemplar. In fact he complained bitterly that he only received this in August 1516, when his translation was almost complete.³ So as a result of his revision and correction he was forced to delay the publication until the second half of 1517.

The delay would seem to have been much too long for this vain humanist. The fear that someone “in penitissima etiam orbis parte relegatus” [even someone banished to a most unpleasant part of the world] would beat him to publication forced him to abandon printing plates, since the preparation of woodcuts would require too much time.⁴

Indeed these fears were not entirely out of place, considering the great interest that the scholarly world had in the text of

syllable] lines by a Bolognese professor Giovan Battista Pio. These parts, like the preface, are not numbered, while the translation of the text is as follows: *Ex diversis auctoribus declaratio sacrarum literarum ejusdem Philippi Phasianini ad studiosos* (fol. 54^v). At the end of the translation there is the following: “Hori Apollinis Niliaci Hieroglyphicarum literarum finis. Opusculum autem hoc latinitati donabat Calendis Septembris anni MDXVI Philippus Phasianinus ad communem studiosorum utilitatem, qui illud etiam in gymnasio Bononiensi, dum lectiones suas auspicaretur, publice recitavit”. Fantuzzi says that both the translation and the *Declaratio* date from different years. In view of their close connection this seems unlikely and what’s more there is no further clue in the bibliography.

³ See Fasanini cit., fol. XLVIII: “Adde quod et satis molestum duplicatumque laborem in praesenti interpretatione nonnullorum decepti vaniloquentia dixerim an fraude impendimus, qui cum Hori fidiorem, quam apud nos esset, codicem se nobis daturus perbenigne recepissent, in hanc usque diem procrastinatores male falsi nos protraxerunt, quando jam extremam hinc ipsi novissimae recognitioni interpretationis nostrae manum imposueramus, ut antiqui mox codicis diu expectato adventu, ubi longe plura et saniora inerant, ad singula revidenda pariterque retractanda iterato labore necessario compulsi fuimus, cum si his fides fuisset, in quibus summa esse debuerat, non tantopere laborandum nobis fuisset”. Then follow comments on the envy of the learned and on their growing impoverishment that reveal the decline of humanists at that time.

⁴ See. *ibid.*, fol. XLVIII: “animus mihi fuerat, quando exempla magis movent, figuras notasque simili forma unicuique capiti et symbolo opusculi hujus sculptas adfigere, ut ex sensu visuque non minus quam ex auditu et lectione res ista perciperetur majorque cum voluptas tum utilitas lectoribus compareretur. Sed quia res paulo operosior et longioris temporis apparebat, nullo pacto coeptum opus differre . . . volui ne, si forte alius in penitissima eodem orbis parte relegatus, ut, quandoque usu venit, in interpretando hoc eodem opusculo inscium me praeoccupasset, malevolorum vitiligationibus paterem, qui me actum agere arguerent, jure an injuria susque deque facientes, quorum quidem improborum magnus est numerus, qui ceu Momus ille laudanda etiam plerumque vituperant”.

Horapollo. Moreover events themselves supported Fasanini who was mistaken when he considered as his only rival Angelo Cospo, a former colleague at the university, to whom the learned Bolognese was referring when he used the term “relegatus.”⁵ After he had become ambassador for Bologna in 1513, Cospo’s excessively free conduct of negotiations with Leo X put him in prison for a short time and he did not return to Bologna but was moved to Vienna. Here, “procul a dulci patria atque ipsius Italiae finibus” [far from my sweet country and from the borders of Italy itself]⁶ he published in September 1514, that is earlier than Fasanini, a Latin version of the text of Palaephatus. Thus as a result Fasanini feared the same fate as an “actum agere” [a repeat of what has already happened] could also occur with respect to the translation of the Horapollo.

However in Vienna Cospo was thinking of something else. The Imperial Councillor Cuspinianus, who had called him to the university, probably through the mediation of Rosinus who was in charge of imperial business in Rome, must have told him after his arrival that Pirckheimer had prepared a translation of *Horapollo* for the Emperor Maximilian. Shortly after he must also have heard the news that Trebazio of Vicenza had trans-

⁵ On Cospo see Aschbach, *Die Wiener Universität und ihre Humanisten Zeitalter Kaiser Maximilians I*, Vienna 1877, p. 278 from vol. II of the History of the University of Vienna, where we read that Cospo, master of classical studies at Bologna, had been called to Vienna in the first decade of the century with an appointment as reader of classical languages. This information is derived from Fantuzzi cit., vol. III, p. 217, who writes, “having graduated in 1503, he held a chair of Rhetoric in our public schools from the year 1506”. Then, “when his father died he succeeded him in the Senate on the 22nd June 1513 by the authority of a pastoral letter from Pope Leo X and, being just invested in this office, in the same year was sent to Rome by the Senate with Senator Ovidio Bargellini to pay respects to Leo, who had then assumed the papacy, and to deal with the business of the city. But because in his handling of these affairs he spoke too freely, he was arrested, although a little later he was freed by the Pontiff. He did not want to return to Bologna so he left Rome and for a long time nothing was heard of him until it was understood that he was in Vienna”. Here he published a translation of Palaephatus, “Pridie Idus Septembris 1514”, with Leonhard and Lucas Alantsee. In August 1516 Hieronymus Victor printed other translations of Cospo, the sixteenth and seventeenth books of the *Library of History* of Diodorus, containing the biographies of Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great, as well as the life of the latter in the chronicle of the Byzantine monk Joannes Zonaras, without however knowing that this was taken from Plutarch; see there the statements on the penetration of hieroglyphics in Germany. Cospo died on November 2, 1516 and was buried in the now destroyed church of San Lorenzo.

⁶ Cospo complains thus to students at the end of the edition of Diodorus and Zonaras cit., fol. 93^v.

lated the *Hieroglyphica* for Peutinger who had generously patronized the latter.⁷

It was this Italian who had long resided in Germany by choice and who was indeed the rival that Fasanini feared. The translation, made by Trebazio and dedicated to Peutinger in April 1515, was published in that same year in Basel by Froben not without profit for this publishing house, whose editions were assuming increasing importance. It was perhaps for this reason that Platonides, the editor with whom Fasanini published, risked printing a new edition of the Horapollo. Yet in Italy in the years to come reprints of the translation of Trebazio were not widely sold and this was probably due to the rapid diffusion of the work by the Bolognese author.⁸

The reputation of Fasanini as a skilled poet, translator and renowned university professor contributed to this. The “gentle youth” had already found fame thanks to his poetic talent and some of his poems appeared in a 1504 collection in memory of a certain Ardente Seraphino Aquilano.¹ Later on Fasanini acquired the nickname of “auratus cygnus” [golden swan] and was praised by his fellow countryman Giambattista Pio as “Latine novella Siren” [Siren of the Latin novella] in an endecasyllable [eleven syllable line] which appears in the translation of the Horapollo.⁹ It

¹ Seraphino Aquilano (1466-1500) was famous for his improvisations as well as his lyric verse. The epithet *ardente* appears in the title to the 1504 collection but was not one of his names.

⁷ Rosinus, a member of the “Collegium poetarum” of Vienna, a close friend of Cuspinianus, was at that time “sollicitator” of the Emperor in Rome.

⁸ See below for a discussion on the existence of a translation of Horapollo which appeared in 1515. While the translation of Trebazio was reprinted in Paris in 1521 and 1530, and in Basel in 1534; there was only one such in Italy - in 1538 in Venice by Jacobo Burgofranco. Leemans cit. is unaware of this edition, preserved in the Library of the Viennese court.

⁹ See Fantuzzi cit., vol. III, p. 300: Gianfileto Achillini wrote the verses: Debbio tacer quel gentil giovinetto/Philippo Fasanin cosi perfetto? [Must I remain silent about that young man/Philippo Fasanin so perfect?] For the rhymes of Fasanini dedicated to Seraphino Aquilano, see. *ibid.*, p. 301. Fantuzzi provides further evidence of contemporary praise. There are some remarks in the *Lexikon* of Zedler on the nickname “cygnus auratus” with a reference to “Königii bibliotheka vetus et nova”. Unfortunately there is no indication of the source. The reference no. 2477 cited by Fantuzzi discusses Giovan Battista Pio in depth. His poetry is so indicative of the knowledge of hieroglyphics by the Italian humanists that it is worth reproducing here: “Memphitae magis profata linguis/ Ostentant animantium figuris;/ Horus Mercurius Jovis minister/ Interpresque dei tenebricosi/ Hinc dictus geminis palam libellis/ Expromit, reserat, reponit, ornat./ Curtis, Juppiter, et laciniosis/ Aevi vulnere cuncta lacinantis/ Miratus, miseratus, hospitali/ Doctus excipiens sinu Philippus:/ Philippus Latii novella Siren/ Donat munificus latinitati/ Vultus restituens probe integellos/ Interpres simul ac parens parentis/ et vanus Samius, nisi Horus Hori”. Interestingly, Horus, author of *Hieroglyphica*, is identified with Mercury, the alleged author of the inscriptions on the columns.

was his close colleague Achille Bocchi, who from 1514 taught rhetoric and the humanities like Fasanini who dedicated the edition of Palaephatus with the following lines:

O nostrae column decusque et ingens
Urbis gloria. Sed quid urbis? Orbis.¹⁰

[O worthy and witty column of ours
The glory of the city. But what city? The world.]

For the translation this was not misplaced praise. The version is still valuable, and at the time Michael Hummelberg, a humanist who lived in Rome, was so struck by it that he sent a copy to his friend Beatus Rhenanus who in turn, in January 1517, edited a reprint in Strasbourg with the publisher Matthias Schurer. A document of Rhenanus has been preserved that proves the extraordinary esteem in which Fasanini was held outside his own homeland. In a letter of November 1519 addressed to the celebrity Albert Burer, describing an ideal course of study, Rhenanus places Fasanini at the same level as Luther and Melanchthon at Wittenberg, as Calvin and Niger in Milan, as well as Pio in Bologna.¹¹

The fame conferred by local academics on the translator of the Horapollo was due to the fact that Fasanini was the first to give courses in a public school on hieroglyphics accepted as a self-contained field of study. In the after-word included in his translation, he states explicitly: "Opusculum hoc etiam in Gymnasio Bononiensi, dum lectiones suas auspicaretur, publice recitavit." [He also recited this little work publicly while teaching in the Gymnasium of Bologna]. His "declaratio sacrarum literarum ex diversis auctoribus" [introduction to sacred literature from vari-

¹⁰ For Bocchi, see Fantuzzi cit., vol II, p. 217. Bocchi began teaching Greek after 1508. With regard to his interest in hieroglyphics, see above, pp. 219 ff. and below, p. 244.

¹¹ The translation of Fasanini is praised in the *Allgemeine Encyclopädie Wissenschaften* cit. in the article headed *Palaephatus* by Ersch and Gruber. For the reprint of Schurer see G. Knodt, "Zur Bibliographie des Beatus Rhenanus Nachtrag," *Centralblatt Bibliothekswesen*, III (1886), pp. 265-274; for Hummelberg's stay in Rome in 1515 and 1516 see Gregorovius vol. VIII cit., p. 339 according to the ms. lat. 4007 in Munich; more detailed information can be found in Adalbert Horawitz, *Michael Hummelberg, eine biographische Skizze*, Berlin 1875. Horawitz reports accurately the words that Beatus wrote to Fasanini in a letter dated the middle of November 1519 (*Briefwechsel des Rhenanus Beatus*, Leipzig 1886, p. 189): "Quae autem fortuna posset tibi gratior arridere, quam si cum duobus aut tribus adulescentulis vel Mediolanum mitteres, Calvum et Nigrum alieno sumptu auditurus vel Wittenbergem sub Luthero et Melanchthone stipendia facturus vel Bononiam Phasianino et B. Pio operam daturus". Horawitz raises the question: "Who is Fasanini?" And Fantuzzi cit. provides the answer.

ous authors] printed at the end is dedicated to scholars, and the fact that he turns first to his own students is highlighted by the words “studiosa juvenum cohors” [the class of young students]¹² It can be said that in his commentary on Horapollo he preserves what constituted the basis of his lectures and of that you can get an idea by considering the notebooks of his listeners.

Fasanini certainly used the translation of the *Hieroglyphica* which was prepared for the press for his own lectures thus emphasizing its importance. Just because he believed that the main purpose of his edition of Horapollo was to provide scholars with a new tool for understanding the ancient authors, as Fra Urbano had also done in Venice, he must also have made use of the text to explain earlier classics.¹³ Filippo had had the chair since 1511, a year before receiving his doctorate. With his translation he wished once and for all to get rid of the petitioners who up to then had tormented him to provide new ideas for their own literary works as a result of the curiosity that he had aroused with his lectures.¹⁴ On the other hand, he had previously announced his edition of the *Palaephatus* at a conference held on the allegorical depictions of the life of man.¹⁵ The hieroglyphic tradition of antiquity could provide a wide variety of images!

¹² See Fasanini cit., fol. XLV: “nosque latine (scripsimus), ne non per Philip-pum studiosa juvenum cohors quovis tempore adjumentum in studiis suis caperet”.

¹³ See *ibid.*, fol. XLV: “non deerit itidem curiosis hominibus hoc ex opusculo atque annotamentis nostris avium, ferarum, piscium, arborum, herbarum aliarumque rerum quarundam natura et, quid per quamque earum figurarum repraesentatur, vera cognitio lumenque ad loca plurium scriptorum recte percipienda”.

¹⁴ See *ibid.*, fol. XLIII: “quod tamen onus (the translation of Horapollo) haud gravato animo suscepi, ut pluribus uno et eodem tempore in commune morem gerens satisfacerem meque a popularibus molestiis (quibus non omni tempore vacandi facultas mihi conceditur) aliqua ex parte subducerem, quod fieri facillime posse ratus sum, ut multos honesta quadam ratione a me removerem, qui quotidie, ut in amplissima civitate magnoque populo accidat necesse est, commentitis quaedam, novas res ad usum illorum praesentem dumtaxat idoneas pro capitu ingenii cujusque et, ut est curiosa semper rerum novarum natura mortalium, efflagitare non desinunt, si Hieroglyphica haec notasque sacras ad plura accommodari aptas de graeco in latinum sermonem transposuissent”.

¹⁵ See the dedication of Fasanini’s edition of *Palaephatus*, where he says that in the idleness of the Christmas holidays – 1514-15 – he had taken the decision to translate *Palaephatus*, all the more so, “quod proximo anno - 1514 - cum in auspiciis nostra, quae lectionibus publicis ex instituto nostro quotannis praemittere consuevimus, vitam mortalium ab infantiae exortu ad hominis usque occasum fabularum sensibus allegoricis describeremus mentioque Palaephali aliquibus in locis a me facta esset, eum opera mea latine loquentem brevi me daturum esse polliciti sumus”. One can assume that the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo was certainly mentioned at his conference.

It is therefore understandable that there might be an ambitious professor in Bologna in the field of hieroglyphics whom Fasanini was close to. For decades it had been the custom to demonstrate learned and esoteric knowledge of medallions. Filippo Beroaldo the Elder, whom Valeriano described as a leader in the field of hieroglyphic study, had dedicated most of his life to teaching these things, accumulating about six hundred students.ⁱⁱ His favorite author was Apuleius. The easy tone that was used by the latter must have given pleasure to this vital humanist no less than the mystical symbolism that had directly induced him to devote himself to the study of hieroglyphs.^{16,iii}

Before including in his "Declaratio" the famous quotation by Apuleius on hieroglyphs,^{17,iv} Fasanini devoted himself to the study of the well-known commentary that Beroaldo had written on this author. It can be assumed also that he had had an opportunity to hear one of the many lectures of Beroaldo, in which, as well as those on the *Metamorphoses*, he had also devoted an exegesis of the treatise of Plutarch on early childhood education, a text which had become a pillar of humanistic education as a result of the translation of Guarino.^{18,v} Beroaldo who was engaged with this text as a reference to the symbolic maxims of Pythagoras, saw them as educational tools especially suitable for expressing mystical and moral precepts through the power of their mnemonic technique. Even before completing his notes on the *Golden Ass*, Beroaldo had composed a short essay¹⁹ on some of these "Symbola Pythagorae mystica, aurea, sacrosancta, quae aenigmata nominantur" [the mystical, golden, sacred symbols of Pythagoras which are called enigmas]^{vi} and

ⁱⁱFor bibliographic references to Beroaldo see Curran, 2007, cit., p. 350 nts. 74 and 75.

ⁱⁱⁱ Georg Wolfgang Franz Panzer, *Älteste Buchgeschichte*, Nürnberg 1789 and Ludwig Hain, *Repertorium bibliographicum*, Stuttgart-Paris 1826-1838.

^{iv} This extract on the description by Apuleius of the hieratic script is quoted by Giehlow above on p. 72.

^v The essay which is usually put first in the *Moralia* is however generally agreed not to be by Plutarch. See the Loeb edition.

^{vi} As is indicated here these Pythagorean maxims were known throughout the Renaissance as the *symbola* of Pythagoras and their origin, history, meaning and authenticity proved to be of endless fascination to contemporary scholars. However, Enigmas which Beroaldo calls them were a specific genre of the symbolic literature of the age defined by Claude-François Menestrier as "an ingenious mystery which affects to veil another sense than that which is presented in words and figures". Claude-François Menestrier, *La philosophie des Images Enigmatiques*, Lyons: Baritel, 1694.

¹⁶ In respect of the hieroglyphic inscriptions on the Bolognese medallions, see above, pp. 57 ff. As regards the knowledge of hieroglyphics of Philip Beroaldo, see above, pp. 57 ff. Fantuzzi cit., vol II, p. III provides extensive information on the life of Beroaldo. The latter was born November 7, 1453 and died July 17, 1505. Between 1475 and 1478, he stayed away from Bologna and for a time - in 1477 - he was in Paris. In a letter to Poliziano he mentions the number of his students. Fantuzzi is skeptical of the possible existence of a 1499 Venetian edition of his commentary on the *Asinus Aureus* of Apuleius, see vol. II, p. 119, and Brunet's *Manuel du Librairie* while Panzer and Hain only know one from 1500. See Panzer cit. for the numerous editions of the sixteenth century.

¹⁷ See Fasanini cit., fol. LXVIII^v.

¹⁸ See Voigt cit., vol II, p. 457. Guarino had already translated the treatise in Florence in 1410 or 1411. Plutarch discusses the following symbola of Pythagoras: "non gusta, quibus nigra est cauda; stateram ne transgrediaris; chronice non inside; non cuivis injice dextram; angustum anulum non gesta; ignem gladio non scrutare; cor ne edas; fabis abstine; cibum in matulam non injice; ad fines, ubi perveneris, non revertito".

on this occasion he recalled the symbol of frugality described by Apuleius, which later would serve to illustrate the hieroglyph of Diodorus of “greed”.²⁰ These aspects reveal the degree of involvement by Beroaldo in hieroglyphic-symbolic issues. Thus his students would have had to deal with this kind of topic not only when they studied what he had written, but also in the course of his lectures, which they would have repeated once they themselves became teachers.

Nevertheless, Beroaldo does not define the Pythagorean symbola specifically as hieroglyphs. This would happen only later, when the treatise of Plutarch dedicated to Isis and Osiris was widely circulated, a text about which the Bolognese humanists, even those knowing Poliziano,²¹ did not appear to have precise information. However, the way in which Beroaldo connects the obscure sayings of the Pythagoreans to Egyptian symbolism led contemporaries to equate them spontaneously to hieroglyphs, so that there seems to be a direct line from Beroaldo through Erasmus to Reuchlin, then far beyond humanism up to the time of Mercati.²² Beroaldo thus prepared the ground for an understanding that would later be seen in the hieroglyphs that had preserved the presence of the mottos of

¹⁹ According to Fantuzzi, based here on Orlandi, *Notizie degli scrittori Bolognesi*, Bologna 1714, the “symbola Pythagorae moraliter explicata” had already been published in 1497 by Benedictus Hectoris. Panzer cit. cites as the first edition that of 1500, also reported by Fantuzzi, while Hain cit. is not aware of either. See Panzer cit. for the numerous editions appearing especially in Basel and Paris.

²⁰ The passage, which is from the middle of the eleventh book of the *Golden Ass*, is used by Beroaldo to illustrate the symbolum “stateram ne transilias, hoc est, ne praetergrediare justitiam”. In the 1508 Paris edition, fol. XV, there is read: “Aegyptii prisca doctrina pollentes in ceremoniis mysticis sinistram manum porrecta palma discapedinatam aequitatis indicium ac symbolum esse voluerunt, propterea quod sinistra manus genuina pigricia, nulla calliditate praedita videbatur aequitati aptior quam dextra”. See above, pp. 51 ff. Beroaldo comments on all the symbols in the treatise of Plutarch except for the fourth and the last two; by contrast he records from the eighth book of the *Moralia* the statement “hirundines sub tecto non habendas”, as well as another, handed down in another context: “coronam urbium non capendam”.

²¹ For Poliziano and the treatise *De Iside et Osiride* see above, p. 152.

²² See below for the exposition on Reuchlin’s hieroglyphic interests. In his work *Degli obelischii di Roma*, Rome 1589, p. 119, Michele Mercati expressed the following opinion on the symbola of Pythagoras: “The Egyptians still used in their reasoning and in their common writing many beautiful maxims veiled in words and formed in the same way that we have seen in the figures of this second species (hieroglyphs)” – on this subject see below regarding the knowledge of hieroglyphics by the Italian humanists – [Italian] “So again, Pythagoras created all his precepts in imitation of the Egyptians”.

vii Here Giehlow truncates the history of the word symbol and it is not clear what he means in the nt. 24 below by a "ring that is rejoined" other than the ring being used for recognition. Deriving originally from the Greek *symballein*, to throw or put together (a similar etymology to emblem, *emballein*), the earliest symbols were used in commercial transactions when the two parties to an agreement broke a piece of bone into two parts which could subsequently be put together in recognition of the identity of the parties. Thus the word developed into any form of identification, a password, a signet ring, an entrance ticket (in particular to a meeting or meal as Giehlow states above) and finally to what we know today as a double concept where one part signifies the other. For the early development of the word "symbolon" see Walter Müri, 'ΣΥΜΒΟΛΟΝ,' *Beilage zum Jahresbericht über das Städtische Gymnasium in Bern*, 1931 vol. I, pp. 1-46 where Müri states that by the end of the third century BCE twelve homonyms of the word can be identified. An authoritative summary of the Renaissance uses of the word is given by Guillaume Budé, *Commentarii linguae graecae*, [Commentaries on the Greek language], of 1529 which is translated with commentary by Denis L. Drysdall, *Emblematica*, 8, 2, (1994) pp. 339 ff.

this kind and represented in images other hieroglyphs that illustrated similar mottos. The importance of all this for Renaissance allegory can be seen when you look at the myriad *symbola* attributed to Pythagoras by the ancients, of which Aldus published a summary taken from the *Protrepticus* of Iamblichus, a text also known by Beroaldo.²³

The short text of Beroaldo on the origin of words and on the concept of the symbol is therefore particularly important because it was extremely popular both in Italy and abroad. In it he concludes that there was the greatest similarity between the Pythagorean *symbola* and military passwords. The only difference is that the first, derived from the secret mystery texts of a sacred science, contained moral sayings and salutary rules for life. These are like insignificant clay vessels which contain treasure and can be compared to dicta of the law, the accepted language of which allows for more complex expression because, being "*aliud sonantia*" [sounding like one thing] they are "*aliud significantia*," [signifying something else], that is precious but enigmatic sayings.^{24,vii} In this way the language of the images of Horapollo could be defined particularly when it dealt with ethical issues. Fate would have it that Beroaldo died just in the summer of the year when – in the autumn – the *Hieroglyphica* would appear.

But his work was not forgotten, especially at the University of Bologna. Fasanini and Bocchi in fact would have continued their studies during the last years of Beroaldo's life and in this way, diffusing the knowledge of hieroglyphics *ex cathedra*, they continued

²³ The humanists' interest in these symbols is shown by the brief summary in Latin that Aldus had published in September 1497 without indicating the source. The signs are taken from Iamblichus, *Protrepticae orationes ad philosophiam*. See *Jamblichi Chalcidensis ex Syria Coele De Vita Pythagorae . . . Joanne Arcerio Theodoreto, Frisio autore et interprete in bibliopolio Commeliano, Franequerae*, [Franecker, Netherlands] 1598, fol. 131. The conclusion of the extract of Aldus is also used by Beroaldo at the end of his treatise. For the humanists, as well as Iamblichus and Plutarch the main sources for the Pythagorean symbols are Suidas, Diogenes Laertius and Clement of Alexandria. They became very popular thanks to the *Adagia* of Erasmus.

²⁴ For Beroaldo "symbolum" means primarily "collatio," "quod plures in unum conferunt" as well as in a banquet "comensalia". Similarly there is also the "Symbolum Apostolicum in uno conferendo, quod quisque de fide sentiebat". This is the ring that is rejoined and consequently the sign of recognition, especially in war: "symbola distincta quisque dux suis militibus tradit". There were also symbols "in archanis priscorum mysteriis" such as the poppy, the image of fertility and of the State, see above, p. 58. Finally Beroaldo writes: "Ex hoc nimirum genere sunt symbola Pythagorae videlicet indicia signa mysteriorum doctrinae sanctoris, quibus sententiae morales atque salutaria documenta continentur".

to teach them in the spirit of Beroaldo.²⁵ Soon Fasanini and Bocchi would have a rival in this field in the person of Romolo Amasea, whose hieroglyphic studies Valeriano admired so much and later there developed a great hostility between Amasea and Bocchi.²⁶ The malign observations of Fasanini on writers who took refuge in droves in Bologna to escape the pangs of hunger, perhaps refer to the first of the two, who, although originally from Bologna, returned to the city after a prolonged absence. It was just jealous criticism that made Fasanini fear for his translation.²⁷

His Latin version of the Horapollo was dedicated to the famous Lorenzo Campeggi on the occasion of his appointment as cardinal.^{28,viii} Before embarking on an ecclesiastical career, Campeggi taught law at the University of Bologna, whence he had come from Padua around 1497 to obtain his doctorate in both branches of the law. He had come into direct contact with Beroaldo, which certainly must have led him to understand the importance of the text of Horapollo. This knowledge must have been very useful when during the years 1511-12 and 1513-1515 Campeggi stayed at the court of Maximilian. At that time,

viii The Sacra Rota Romana (nt. 28) is the supreme court of the Catholic Church. Online editions of de Perugini's *Auditori Della Sacra Rota Romana, Memorie Istoriche* are available today. See for instance <http://archive.org/stream/deperuginiauditoomari#page/n5/mode/2up>

²⁵ The facts which we have already mentioned, namely that Fasanini was known as a poet by 1504 and Bocchi taught Greek by 1508, suggest that as part of the humanistic environment the training of children was very important. Both scholars taught in Bologna until their death, for Fasanini in 1531 and for Bocchi in 1562 at the age of seventy years.

²⁶ For Amasea, see Fantuzzi cit., vol. I, p. 206. Romolo Amasea, a colleague of Bocchi, had in 1514 obtained the post of "public reader of humane letters". In a letter of 8 March 1525 he complained that Bocchi and Pius had tried to "ruin his life", see Fantuzzi cit., vol II, p. 217. Valeriano dedicated to Amasea the commentary *De formica, scarabeo et echino terrestrie*; see Valeriano *Hieroglyphica*, cit., fol. 57.

²⁷ See Fasanini cit. at the end of the *Declaratio*, fol. L. "est in cujusvis non modo literarum omnino expertis, sed famelicorum quorundam literatorum, qui in hanc urbem pedibus, quod dicitur, albis ad famem propulsandam quotidie agminatim confugiunt, iudicium de literatis viris facere eorumque vigilias stimulis elevare".

²⁸ For the date of the composition of the dedication, see above, ch. 7 nt. 2. Fasanini tells in great detail of the sensation that the appointment of a cardinal aroused in Bologna. Fantuzzi cit., vol. III, pp. 47 ff., describes Campeggi in comprehensive detail. Born in Milan in 1474, he arrived in Pavia with his father, then went to Padua where he taught in 1493 and finally ended up in Bologna. In 1511 he became a "uditore della Sacra Ruota Romana". At that time he served as a mediator between Julius II and the Emperor, then went as ambassador to the court in Milan and was sent back to Germany by Pope Leo X at the end of 1513, accompanying the emperor on his travels. He participated in the Congress of Vienna in 1515 and then returned to Rome. He was especially familiar with Mathäus Lang and Jakob van Banissis. For the letter of Valeriano to his secretary Crispus on the entrance of Lang in Rome, see above, p. 213. In later years Campeggi was a bitter enemy of the Reformation.

the scientific interests of the Emperor were directed primarily at the translation of Horapollo edited by Pirckheimer and to the hieroglyphic decoration of the Triumphal Arch. This prince, who typically loved to talk of erudite issues with his courtiers, would certainly have been involved in conversations about ancient Egyptian letters even with the former lecturer at the University of Bologna. Campeggi appears to have been no less interested in the subject than the rest. Fasanini knew this well when he decided to dedicate to him the translation of the *Hieroglyphica*. So in fact the eulogy says: “Cui magis per immortales deos sacras Aegyptiorum literas nuncupare, quam sacratissimo et quo nemo absolutior omnibusque perfectior esset, aut potui aut debui!” [To whom should we rather address the sacred script for the immortal gods of the Egyptians, than to the most sacred and to him of whom no one is more absolute and more perfect in all things, or could, or should be!]²⁹

The edition of the Horapollo by Fasanini did not have a reputation equal to his translation of Palaephatus. In fact, not only was it compared to the more superficial work of Trebazio, but was even more bitterly criticized.³⁰ In fact Fasanini translates very loosely at times, often by inserting whole passages of Homer and Ammianus.³¹ In his defense we should mention the extremely bad condition of the original, as well as the concern to provide his students with a readable work. But here, as my purpose is to highlight hieroglyphic trends within humanism, I do not intend to enter into any controversy about this translator, to whom we must be grateful that he left in his essays a lively image of how, especially in the field of poetry, scholars were very involved in the Egyptian Renaissance. There is no need to criticize Fasanini for having taken remarks about the essence of the hieroglyphs which he sometimes calls “*Symbola aenigmataque Aegyptiarum literarum*” [symbols and enigmas

²⁹ See Fasanini cit., Fol. A^{iv} which emphasizes the literary interests. At the end of the biographical description of his patron, written with his usual pomposity, he also mentions sending his work “ad Maximilianum Caesarem Augustum Romanorum Imperatorem designatum” under Leo X.

³⁰ De Pauw in his edition of Horapollo (Trajecti ad Rhenum 1727) calls the translations of both Trebazio and Fasanini “ineptissimas” and writes that the latter had not based his work on “antiquos libros”, but on “ingeniolium suum”. David Hoeschel in his edition of Horapollo (Augustae 1595) puts it this way: “Phasianino codicem haud malum fuisse”. See Leemans cit., p. XXX.

³¹ Thus Fasanini (bk. II, ch. 101), inserts before the verse of the Iliad, (see above, p. 164 the following sentence: “quamobrem poeta Achillem Agamemnoni iratum dicentem inducit”; while in bk. I, chap. 42, he adds to the interpretation of Horapollo the passage on the bee hieroglyph of Ammianus – see above, p. 41.

of Egyptian letters]³² mainly derived not from the original sources, but from humanistic compilations. In addition to the *Adagia* of Erasmus, there are also cited in the “*Declaratio*”, sometimes word for word, the *Antiquae Lectiones* of Rhodiginus, and especially the *Honesta Disciplina* of Crinito.³³ Since he makes no reference to any humanist writers, one gets the impression that Fasanini possessed immense erudition. I wonder his contemporaries did not take it badly in view of his free association of the ideas drawn from the literary heritage of others. At the time they did not have today’s strict attitude in this respect and they should have been particularly pleased to have finally a comprehensive picture of what the greatest thinkers of antiquity had developed about hieroglyphics.

You have to imagine the effect on the culture of the time that the citations from Herodotus, Diodorus, Pliny, Tacitus, Lucan, Apuleius, Iamblichus, Proclus, Ammianus, Macrobius must have had, all of whom were filled with deep admiration and respect for the wisdom that was revealed in the the hieroglyphs.³⁴ The extracts about the prophecy of the sacred scribes on the works of Moses must have aroused an amazement mixed with superstition about the divinatory skills of the Egyptians. In view of the atmosphere of mysticism of the time, the remarks of Rufinus, related by Fasanini, on the hieroglyph of the cross as a symbolic image of future salvation, had to ensure that the study of hieroglyphics fulfilled a very important role.

The fervor with which Fasanini endeavored to reintroduce into contemporary life the wonderful art of thinking, speaking and writing in hieroglyphs is therefore quite understandable. As a result, this attempt to breathe new life into ancient Egyptian writing did not need any special effort to make this difficult subject more attractive.

The notes of Fasanini posted alongside the Latin text, reveal his considerable commitment to the explanation of all the more or less abstruse Greek terms, in particular the names of deities,

³² Note the similarity between this expression and the text of Beroaldo on the Pythagorean *symbola*.

³³ Compare the passages quoted by Erasmus, and Rhodiginus and Crinito – see pp. 158 and 197 ff. – with the text of the *Declaratio* of Fasanini, fol. XLX^v (literally from Erasmus), fol. XLVII (literally from Rhodiginus), fol. XLVII (literally from Crinito). From this comes also the explanation on the lotus flower according to Iamblichus, and the mention of the hieroglyph of the cross by Rufinus.

³⁴ Fasanini also quotes Plutarch and Strabo as authors of hieroglyphs without considering their merits.

animals, plants and cities, for which he makes use of parallel passages in the classics. Similarly Fasanini strives to improve the comprehensibility of the text, emphasizing its ethical aspects in particular.³⁵ He has a sense of the connections between contemporary and Egyptian symbolism. Thus, in the case of the hieroglyph depicting a lion's head he notes that even in his own time it was customary to put statues of lions as guardians of the mansions of the wealthy. It was precisely this kind of remark that, more than anything, gave rise both to the vanity and the spirit of imitation of contemporaries.³⁶

And yet it was above all for the use of poets that Fasanini sought to illustrate the content of the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollon. The belief that this text constituted a source of particular importance for the art of poetry came to him from the observation that there appeared passages from Homer in the definition of some of the hieroglyphs.^{37ix} The translator suggests that there might be learned from the inexhaustible treasure of the *Hieroglyphica* arguments and observations which could be used to aid the inspiration of poets and he expressly states that he had translated Horapollon for these latter, particularly for the composers of *epithalamia*. Of course, in view of the numerous hieroglyphs which illustrate the relationship between spouses, he addresses them with the invitation: “habebunt imprimis epithalamistae, qui novam nuptam solemniter ritu sponsalia celebrantem, qui mos in patria nostra frequens est, honestare cupiunt, patentissimos campos” [they will be used in the first place by writers of epithalamia, who have found some new bride who wishes to celebrate the solemn rite of betrothal, a custom which is common in our own country, and whom they desire to honor in the most extensive manner].³⁸ Reading such a doctrinaire

^{ix} The hieroglyph of Horapollon II.54 referred to in nt. 37 below is described as a man dancing and piping and not singing a song. The latter reflects the opening line of the *Iliad*.

³⁵ See Fasanini cit., fol. XV, the note on the hieroglyph “canis”: “scribas ut latrantes canes esse debere atque severos in agendis arcanis”; fol. XIV^v for the hieroglyph “atramentum, cribrum ac funis”; “divites disciplinis liberalibus ornare debere, ne oves aurei velleris sint” and so on.

³⁶ In the note on the hieroglyph of the lion for “vigilans” (ibid., bk. I, 19) Fasanini writes: “Leones pro foribus templorum veluti custodes etiam hac tempestate poni”; see also the remarks of Fasanini on Horapollon (I.16) that they used to decorate water-clocks with cynocephali [dog-heads], “ritum hunc apud nostrates in quibusdam fontibus servari”.

³⁷ Other than those described above on p. 164, nt. 27, he misses the Homeric extract μέλος ἀείδει [singing a song] from bk. II, ch. LIV which is also omitted from Leemans cit. p. XI.

³⁸ See Fasanini cit., fol. XLV. Among the hieroglyphs which refer to married life, that of the “crows” as a symbol for harmony should be emphasized first; see ibid., I.8.



Fig. 31 “Cominus et Eminus”, the device of Louis XII of France from
Giovio's *Dialogo Dell'imprese*

discussion on the poetic muse it is difficult to repress a small shiver and yet it was that assumption that gave rise to the development of emblematic poetry.

With the same precision Fasanini illustrates his opinion about the importance that the *Hieroglyphica* has for the figurative arts. Here he goes beyond the rather widespread custom of writing illustrated sentences on walls and objects, that is the so-called *imprese*. Apparently sorely harassed by his contemporaries to promote these “devices”, Fasanini turned energetically to concentrate on them in the figurative language of Horapollon: “Ex eodem (opusculo) dicta brevia aut notas, quas in gladiis, annulis, reticulis, baltheis, cythara, lectulis, tricliniis, laquearibus, stragulis, foribus, musaeo, mensa, speculis, cubiculo, conopeis, fictilibus argenteisque vasculis affigant, plerique mutuari poterunt, nec non quibus figuris cum pictis tum sculptis secreta animi involucris quibusdam occludere parietesque domesticos oblinere possint. Et ut cuique commodum erit, argumenta sibi et titulos rebus suis accomodatos hinc abunde arripiet”.³⁹ [From the same (little work) short sayings or notes can be inscribed on swords, rings, bags, belts, lutes, beds, couches, on ceilings, coverlets, doors, in a study, on a table, on mirrors, in a bedroom, under a canopy, on pottery and silver vessels, most of which will be derived from those images from the secrets of the imagination

³⁹ See *ibid.*, fol. XLV.

both in painting and sculpture which cover or are painted on the walls of houses. And so every person may fully display, as is appropriate, his own maxims and the mottos which are most appropriate to his own affairs]. There did not seem to be any one fixed or floating object that Fasanini, a true child of his age and a lover of embellishment, did not find suitable to be decorated with hieroglyphic images. All artists, painters or sculptors, engravers, embossers, gunsmiths, weavers, potters, carpenters, should in fact, he suggests, make use of the riches of hieroglyphs.

Instead of free creations, he demanded intellectual concepts, instead of naive forms taken from nature and from life, he required images that incorporated words and sayings. He clearly demonstrates here the dogmatism of an artistic conception in the Egyptian tradition. And on this level the Bolognese master was not in fact alone. There was a host of others who thought like him and he knew this when he says at the end of the words quoted above: “ut sunt, qui symbola sibi Amasiaeque suae dumtaxat communia sortiri volunt quique notis litterarum novis, quae amicis tantum pateant, caeteris vero incognitae sint, uti gaudent” [just as there are those that wish to keep some symbols in a new secret script available only for themselves and their girlfriends or those which are only known to friends but not to others, so enjoy them]. Thus were born the hieroglyphic frescoes in Santa Giustina in Padua^x and thus Mellini requested the help of the learned Valeriano and, almost in the same year in which Fasanini wrote, Raphael was busy designing the frescoes in the Vatican Loggia,^{xi} a pure expression of joy for the wisdom and the artistic inspiration of the ancient grotesques. In this way you can recognize the different trends at the time and the competition between all those in the arts and begin to understand the genesis of what later would form emblematics.

Driven by the desire to make the hieroglyphs a current mode of expression, Fasanini went even further, giving advice as to how to use them for encryption: “Si commodè, he wrote, “aenigmata hujusmodi figurasque adhibere in epistolis poterunt, quicunque ab eruditis dumtaxat scriptionem suam intelligi cupient, mihique aliquid et Horo hac in parte acceptum referent”. [If it is appropriate, anyone who wishes their writing to be understood only by the initiated can use riddles of this kind and figures in messages, and I credit this partly to Horus]. He contrasts the hieroglyphs, as a script comprehensible only by scholars, with “non-digit cyphers,” as they defined cipher systems, about which the abbot Trithemius particularly had published texts on their everyday use, texts which had met with great interest, and “fig-

^x But see pp. 133 ff. The first stage of the Santa Giustina frescoes was completed in the 1490s and the second forty years later.

^{xi} Probably between 1517 and 1519.

ured cyphers", that is the enigmatic images based on assonance, which enjoyed particular popularity at the time.⁴⁰

In this way Fasanini publicized hieroglyphic writing just at the time that the German humanists were preparing a panegyric to the Emperor taken in precisely the same way from the images of Horapollo. And it must be emphasized that it was in fact common opinion among scholars that it was possible to make use of ideographic script in the same way that the Egyptians had.

But to whom did the learned Bolognese owe his unshakable confidence in the possibility of a practical use for hieroglyphs? Evidently it was the author who had prompted him to consider them as suitable for all kinds of decoration in these various techniques and immediately the thought turns to Colonna who was closely linked with Horapollo. In fact, Fasanini knew the *Hypnerotomachia* and if he did not know it of it earlier, he was certainly directed to it by the *Adagia* of Erasmus. Fasanini did not just read and study the hieroglyphic inscriptions of Colonna, he even admired the woodcuts and these must have given him the idea, which unfortunately he did not pursue, of also illustrating his own work: "nos et vidimus picturam quandam

⁴⁰ After dealing with the predilection for symbols, Fasanini writes about the custom at the time of resorting to secret writing: "nam et illorum usus, cum parentum nostrorum memoria frequens fuerit, hac quoque tempestate secretioribus in rebus plerisque adhibetur". M. Gio. Andrea Palazzi *Discorsi sopra l'imprese recitati nell' Accademia di Urbino*, Bologna 1575 p. 40 ff. provides a complete picture of ciphers used in the sixteenth century. He distinguishes in fact "ciphers of acts, words" and "by material", the latter in turn divided into "figurative" and "non-figurative". As experts in figurative scripts he names not only Trithemius but also Belasio, Porto and Monsignor di Pola and gives as an example of the second kind of script the enigma which shows a diamond, King Midas and death. Together with the phrase "a diamond gives me death", these signify a woman he loved with the name of Diamond. Even Ludovico Domenichi in his *Ragionamento, nel quale si parla d'imprese d'arme e d'amore*, Milan 1539, provides similar examples, for which see more below: how the word "Barbara" was represented by a beard and half a frog (barb-ra[na]), Caterina as a king of cards – re, king, in Bolognese pronounced "ri" – between a broken chain (cate-ri-na). As a further example of this kind Domenichi also cites a passage from Masuccio Salernitano, the fifteenth century imitator of Boccaccio, in which an abandoned lover sends to his unfaithful beloved a ring with a diamond and the Hebrew inscription "lama zabatani", which means "false diamond, because thou hast forsaken me?" This story (see the 1525 Venetian edition of the *Novellino* "in which are contained fifty novelle"), was set by Masuccio in the period in which King René of Anjou was staying in Florence, and was later taken over by Rabelais in *Pantagruel* bk. III, ch. XXIV for a satire on the secret writing of his era. As far as is possible to ascertain, Rabelais' commentators have not noticed the Italian origin of this story. On the custom in France of writing with figure puzzles, see particularly the hieroglyphic art of Geoffroy Tory.

praeter figuras illas animalium, vasorum, instrumentorumque formas, quibus pro literis utebantur in obeliscis in Romae existentibus in qua circulus primo, mox anchora inerat, quam mediam delphinus obtorto corpore circumplectitur'. [And we have seen in a certain picture as well as the figures of these animals, the form of vessels and instruments, which were used as letters on the obelisks existing in Rome in which there was first a circle, and then an anchor in the middle of which the body of a dolphin was twisted around.]⁴¹ He describes the engravings mentioned above, in particular the explanation of the hieroglyphics of the parapet of the bridge (see fig. 16).

This then is the opinion expressed by Fasanini in his lectures about the importance of the study of hieroglyphics, an opinion, which from 1517, he consigned to the press. The study of the hieroglyphs of Horapollo and of the *Hypnerotomachia* thus led him to share the views accepted in the circle of Venetian scholars, who in addition to the scholars of Bologna, had researched the same sources. It was the determination with which he encouraged the incorporation of the tradition of hieroglyphic images in the art of poetry that gave him a particularly important role among his colleagues who did the same although not so directly and forcefully.

☛ *The hieroglyphic studies of Fasanini and Alciato*

Based on what we have said, you can easily envisage that these ideas of Fasanini would be used in a verse collection of hieroglyphs from one of the local poets, the "epithalamistae", who were accustomed to solicit the busy translator of the Horapollo so wasting his valuable time, or by one of the scholars who were professionally engaged in Bologna for the study of rhetoric and poetry. But the course of events took a different turn and in this case it was neither a poet with artistic interests nor an artist who felt poetic inspiration in his blood but a young lawyer from Milan temporarily in Bologna to complete his law studies who followed the lead of the Bolognese professor.

This was Andrea Alciato,⁴² one of the most famous lawyers

⁴¹ See Fasanini cit., p. LXVIII. The passage continues: "quod symbolum, Augusti Caesaris dictum se haud dubie significare ostendit: festina tarde. Per delphinum enim perniciosissimum natantium animal, anchora innexum maturitatem illam designabant. Quod cum ab hac Aegyptiorum simili sculptura provenire animadvertissem, animus mihi fuerat".

⁴² For Alciato see Green cit. Strangely this scholar did not study the correspondence of Alciato with a close friend Francesco Calvi, a bookseller, and this reference is based on Mazzuchelli *Gli scrittori d'Italia*. vol. I, Brescia 1753, pp. 354 ff., which gives the most important elements of this correspondence.

of the first half of the sixteenth century, the founder – along with Zasius^{xii} and Budé – of modern jurisprudence.

One of the most interesting chapters in the history of humanism, so full of new developments, is the story of how this lawyer came to deal with hieroglyphics, naming the verses written by him in this regard *Emblemata*, and how he ended up being the father of emblematic poetry by recommending the intellectual content of his work as a model for artists. We are faced with a development which highlights the remarkable versatility of the scholars of the time and which shows the particular relevance of hieroglyphics in every discipline, one which confirmed the widespread knowledge of the ancient Egyptian world in the humanities as it was handed down from the classics.^{xiii}

In order to remove any doubt about the close ties running between the emblems of Alciato and humanistic study of hieroglyphics, let me quote statements which will dispel any such doubt. To explain the omission of any adequate mention of emblems in the works of Green, an accurate biographer of Alciato and in turn a student of the topic, you should not attach so much to the fact that they were hidden in works which he rarely consulted but rather put it to a failure to understand how an interest in hieroglyphics obsessed almost all humanists. Although he had thoroughly reviewed the comments on the *Emblemata*, published in 1571 by the French jurist Claude Mignault,^{43, xiv} in which he clearly grasps the im-

The letters of Alciato are part of a collection that was once in the possession of Markwart Gude, a scholar from Holstein. The collection was published later by Peter Burmann with the title *Marquardi Gudii et doctorum virorum ad eum epistolae, quibus accedunt ex bibliotheca Gudiana clarissimorum et doctissimorum virorum, qui superiore et nostro saeculo floruerunt, et Claudii Sarrauii epistolae ex eadem Bibliotheca*, the Hague: H. Scheuleer, 1714. It appears that this publication has fallen into oblivion, since Horawitz, for example, has not included it in the collection *Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus* cit., that is the letters of this scholar that had been printed in 1714.

⁴³ In the edition of Claude Mignault or Claudius Minos (Ludguni Batavorum 1591), p. 11 we can read about the characteristics of the hieroglyphic symbols: “*emblemata sunt picturae quaedam ingeniosae ab ingeniosis hominibus excogitatae primum, dein repraesentatae iisque litteris similes, quae Hieroglyphicae ab Aegyptiis nominatae arcana sapientiae vetustissimorum hominum symbolis et sacris celatis continebant; cujus doctrinae mystica non nisi initiatis et intelligentibus committi permittebant, a quibus non injuria profanum vulgus arcebat. Eos enim aemulatus Alciatus, quoties severiore legum studio ad humanitatis disciplinas animi reficiendi causa diverteret, ex variis artificum nobiliorum locis arguta et lepida sane symbola partim collegit, partim suo arbitratu ad eruditum quendam sensum novo cultu confinxit*”. To illustrate the use of Horapollon, Mignault emphasizes on p. 278 the symbol of the stork for “*pietas*” and on p. 283 that of the crow for “*harmony*”. He also

^{xii} Ulrich Zasius (1461-1536) taught jurisprudence in Germany as well as holding administrative positions in several German cities. In 1508 he was appointed an imperial counselor by the Emperor Maximilian. For the influence of these three jurists including Zasius see Michael Leonard, ‘Guillaume Bude, Andrea Alciato, Pierre de l’Estoile: Renaissance Interpreters of Roman Law’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 58, 1, (1997) pp. 21-40.

^{xiii} It is now clear after one hundred years from when Giehlow wrote, a period during which the emblem literature has been subjected to the scrutiny of many scholars, that the origin of Alciato’s work and the corpus of emblems is much more complex than Giehlow imagined. The bibliography of both the original emblem literature and modern commentaries on the subject is too large to be incorporated here. Further bibliographic and other information can be obtained from the Glasgow University website: <http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/> (10/17/2012); from the website of the Library of Renaissance Symbolism: <http://www.camrax.com/symbol/emblemintro.php4> (10/17/2012); from the journal *Emblematica*, published by AMS Press, Inc; from the *Index Emblematicus* from Toronto University Press and from numerous other bibliographies of individual countries as well as general studies. A background to the whole field is given in Robin Raybould’s *An Introduction to the Symbolic Literature of the Renaissance*, Trafford, 2005. An introduction to the relationship between hieroglyphs and emblems is given by Daniel Russel, ‘Emblems and Hieroglyphs: Some observations on the Beginnings and the Nature of the Emblematic Forms’, *Emblematica*, 1, 2, (1986), pp. 227-243.

^{xiv} Claude Mignault wrote commentaries in several editions of Alciato’s *Emblemata* from that of Dion a Prato in 1571 until that of Richerii in 1602, each being expanded and extended. He died in 1606 but his commentary was included in the great edition of Thulius referred to by Giehlow below.

^{xv} Claude-François Menestrier, described at the time as “that prodigy of nature” was perhaps the most prolific seventeenth century writer on the theory of symbols and images and (according to Renard, cited by Praz, cit., p. 178) had one hundred fifty-two works on aspects of symbolism attributed to him.

^{xvi} But see Daniel Russell ‘Emblems and Hieroglyphics: Some Observations on the Beginnings and the Nature of Emblematic Forms,’ *Emblematica*, 1, 2, (1986), 227 where it is suggested that the actual influence of the Horapollon on the emblem literature was relatively small. This view is endorsed by Brunon cit. 42: “les emprunts directs à ces hieroglyphes authentiques sont relativement peu nombreux dans les Emblèmes”. By authentic he means directly taken from Horapollon.

^{xvii} The book can be viewed on line at

http://books.google.ru/books/about/De_ç_sig-nificatione.html?id=VCo8AAAAcAAJ&redir_esc=y

portance that these studies had for humanism, Green recalls such passages only as citations taken from Horapollon which are particularly highlighted in his text. And although Thuilius⁴⁴ and François Menestrier^{45, xv} subsequently expounded the text of Alciato in a comprehensive manner, Green missed the only real origin of the *Emblemata*, that is the diffusion of interest in hieroglyphics.^{xvi}

This is what Alciato wrote in his treatise *De verborum significatione*:^{xvii} “verba significant, res significantur. Tametsi et res quandoque etiam significant, ut hieroglyphica apud Horum et Chaeremonem, cujus argumenti et nos carmine libellum composuimus, cui titulus est *Emblemata*.” [Words signify, ideas are signified. Although at times things likewise signify, as for example the hieroglyphs in the writings of Horus and Chaeremon, a motif [*argumenti*] we have also used in a book of poetry entitled

refers frequently to the treatise of Plutarch *De Iside et Osiride*, and to the texts of Crinito. According to Mignault, p. 10, the expression of Alciato in the epigram of Peutinger, mentioned below, “tacitis notis scribere” corresponds to “hieroglyphicis notis scribere”. Green cit., p. 36, is content to observe rather that “in the same Crinito also are found remarks which may have suggested trees to Alciato as subjects for emblems; it is to this effect, that among other symbols or signs of the Egyptian theology, he found that the Lothou and other trees of that kind were celebrated” and on p. 40 he writes: “These symbols (of courage and wakefulness) the commentator attributes to the ancient fathers of the church and even to Horapollon”. That’s all that he considers appropriate to discuss of the remarks of Mignault on the influence which the ancient Egyptians had on Alciato.

⁴⁴ The huge edition of 1004 pages of commentary made by the professor at the University of Freiburg, Johannes Thuilius, was published in Padua in 1621 by Paulus Pozzius [Tozzi]. In it are also included the commentaries of Mignault, C. Franciscus Sanctius, Laurentius Pignori and Fredericus Morellius. The main passage which deals with the dependence of Alciato on the hieroglyphs is on p. LXIII. In this regard, Green cit., p. 39, merely states: “the Paduan editor (1621 edition, p. 109) declares that the emblem of the beetle and the eagle is taken from the hieroglyphics of Horapollon”. For this and other borrowings, see below in the section on hieroglyphs in the *Emblemata* of Alciato.

⁴⁵ The work of the Jesuit priest François Menestrier, *L’Art des emblèmes*, Lyon 1662, was published a year after the second edition of the commentary of Thuilius. On p. 4 can be read: “depuis les Egyptiens qui commencèrent les premiers à couvrir leurs mystères sous des hieroglyphes, toutes les nations de les ont fait gloire de les imiter. C’est de cet art merveilleux que sont sortis les emblèmes, les devises, les énigmes, les chiffres, les blasons et les empreintes de médailles et de monnoyes”; the epigram of Alciato for Peutinger is interpreted in this way on p. 14. Green did not use this work of Menestrier in an in-depth way and the index of the sources for emblematic literature that is listed on p. VII of his introduction mentions only his *Jugement des auteurs qui ont écrit des Devises prefixed to the (sic) Philosophie des Images*, Paris 1695. This treatise, of which we use here the Lyon edition of 1694, enters into the merits of Egyptian hieroglyphics in a comprehensive manner, see pp. 12 ff.

Emblemata].⁴⁶ By studying the interpretative rules of the Digest (bk. V, tit. XVI), the author realized that hieroglyphs, which at the time depicted words, were to be contrasted with images of things but on the basis that objects could not signify^{xviii} but only be signified. Instead of being surprised by the ideographic nature of the hieroglyphs, Alciato believed that the testimony of the ancients in this regard constituted a “ratio scripta”^{xix} and that this was superior to what was promulgated by Roman law. This dogmatic interpretation did not however, encourage his acute mind to investigate further, so, not without satisfaction, he came to embrace this exception to the intent of Roman law.

As for the relationship between emblematics and hieroglyphics, Alciato takes the position set out in a letter dated December 9, 1521 written in Milan to Francesco Calvi, who was then in Rome.⁴⁷ Green, who is more interested in the bibliography of

xviii But this is not what Alciato says in the extract immediately above: “at times things likewise signify”. In this, Alciato follows the orthodox Thomist line on scriptural interpretation: “the scriptures contain a twofold truth. One lies in the things meant by the words used - that is the literal sense. The other in the way things become figures of other things, and in this consists the spiritual sense. See *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, VII, 14, 275 cited in E. H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, Oxford: Phaidon, 1978 p. 13.

xix “Ratio scripta” is the principle that the text (of the law) speaks for itself, that is that there is little room for interpretation of such text which must be taken literally. This was the guiding principle in Roman and medieval law.

⁴⁶ D. Andreae Alciato . . . *De verborum significatione libri quatuor* was printed by Seb. Gryphius in Lyon in 1530. In a letter dated September 3, 1530, addressed to Calvi, Alciato explains the choice of printer, “sed quia suspecta mihi incipit esse propter hosce hereticos Basilea, transferre me amorem ad Gryphium oportuit, sive quod Germanus vir summae fidei est, sive quia inter excussores istos hic plurimum studiorum habet, et, quod mea referit, oculatus est”. The dedication to Franciscus Turnone, “Archiepiscopus Riturigensis” of 1 May 1529 shows that the treatise represented the result of eight years of his lectures: “exstant ad legales nostras exercitationes commentarii octavo ab hinc anno me dictante ab auditoribus excepti”. This agrees well with the information provided in the exchange of letters with Calvi. On December 19, 1520 Alciato had written from Avignon, “Extra ordinem digestorum de verborum significatione commentarios cudo; ex eis aliqua tibi tradere possum, quo cum auctario aliquo alios libros edas, si modo editurus es. Celerius pariunt elephantia, quam tu plane Callipides”. In the report drawn up on December 31, 1520 - not 1521, since by then Alciato had returned to Milan, one reads: “hunc ego tractatum (de verborum significatione) ex ordine profiteor ita elegantar et erudite et ut acheronticos senes in ea lectione habeam discipulos”. The treatise came out so late because of Calvi. On November 5, 1521 Alciato had offered him the job ready for printing, although the editors of Basel and Lyon had urged him: “Sed apud me Calvus instar omnium est”. After repeatedly returning to this subject in his letters, Alciato in May 1524 expressed in a rather irritated way: “me certiore facias, quo temporei poteris commodè hisce meis libris edendis (*commentarii in tractatum de verborum significatione*) operam dare. Vereor enim, ne, ut in caeteris, ita et hac in re te Callipidem praestes, quia omnia movens nihil promoves”. In the end the author gives up on the work of Calvi.

⁴⁷ See the collection of letters of Gude cit., p. 96. The letter is dated “Quinto Idus Decembris 1522”, and he continued to cite it thus even if the doubts of Mazzuchelli [*Scrittori d'Italia* (1758)], on the correctness of the dating should have suggested more caution. Evidently Alciato wrote the letter a year earlier, a fact shown from the conflict with the contents of a letter dated “Nonis Novembris 1521”. This date is certainly correct and the letter refers to Alciato's resignation as a professor at Avignon, caused by a dispute over the payment

the emblem than the biography of its autho, considers the text only from this point of view, relying even here on what he had seen in his predecessors. All this explains why the rich material contained in the correspondence with Calvi has not yet been fully used to explore the work of Alciato and the era in which he lived. Suffice it to recall for example the discussion of Alciato and Calvi on the question of the Reformation⁴⁸ and his attitude towards the French court.⁴⁹ In the letter mentioned above Alciato talks about his literary work and the drafting of the *Emblemata* in respect of which he writes: “His Saturnalibus, ut il-

of his salary in his absence during the plague of 1521. This is also hinted at at the conclusion of the treatise *De verborum significatione*. In the first letter Alciato not only repeats the same date, but also uses the same words: “cum Mediolanum ex Gallia appuli Nonis Novembris, nihil prius habui, quam ut certiore te reditus mei facerem”. The correlation both of time and content cannot leave any doubt that it is intended to refer to the letter of November 1521. Assuming that this hypothesis is correct, even though the letter of December had been prepared in the same year as the date “Nonis Novembris”, without further specification it can only refer to the November just past. In essence therefore both of the letters date back to the same year. Moreover, the obvious concern of Alciato in motivating his friend as soon as possible makes it unlikely that he would have waited another thirteen months to renew his request for the unanswered text.

⁴⁸ Regarding Calvi, see Tiraboschi, cit., vol. XVIII, pp. 489 ff. Calvi was a native of Pavia and became known as a dealer in books especially those of the Lutherans in Italy. In 1518 he was in Basel, where he knew Froben and Rhenanus. The former praises him in a letter to Luther of 14 February 1515; the letters sent by Rhenanus and collected by Gude go back to the same date. For the further correspondence of these scholars with Calvi, see the frequently cited collection of letters of Rhenanus edited by Horowitz. Calvi annoyed Alciato because he took a stand against Luther until, on April 24, 1521, Alciato sent him an letter from Milan which is interesting because it shows how a woodcut by Holbein influenced his penchant for epigrammatic poetry: “Quid enim toties mihi Lutherium inculcas? Quem ego, bene vel male faciat, nihil aestimo, et quoniam id ad me non pertinet, susque deque fero. Et forte publice interest esse aliquem, qui tantam licentiam coerceat et qui etiam injusta defendat, ut saltem justa obtineantur. Morem tibi in eo gessi, quod exorcistae titulo malum epigramma composui; ex Platoniorum tamen traditionibus quaedam in eo adsunt. Arminii mentionem feci, ut Frobenii temeritati obviam irem, qui in secunda Erasmi editione in testamentum novum liminare pagellam pictura insignivit, qua Quinctilium Varum Arminius superat victoque insultat hoc dicitio: tandem vipera sibillare desiste, ut minime dubitem vera esse, quae scribis de Germanis. Sed hoc morbo laborantur omnes barbari”. Alciato opens here a glimpse into his own poetic mindset since he was influenced by both images and words.

⁴⁹ For his relationship with Francis I, see in particular the letter of September 3, 1520 from Bourges, Gude cit., p. 104. Again Alciato tells here of the effect that a figurative work can arouse in a poet: “Attulit munus regi Laurentius Ursinus Venerem aeream. Lysippi alii arbitrantur, ego Clochini aut id genus recentioris suspicor. In eum plerique carmina posuerunt, quorum aliqua ad te mitto, ut inde conjecturam facias et hic poesim nedum jura civilia”.

lustrum Ambrosio Visconti^{50,xx} morem gererem, libellum composui, cui titulus feci Emblemata; singulis enim epigrammatibus aliquid describo, quod ex historia vel ex rebus naturalibus aliquid elegans significat, unde pictores, aurifices, fusores id genus conficere possint, quae scuta appellamus et petasis fugimus vel pro insignibus gestamus qualis anchora Aldi, columba Frobenii et Calvi elephas et tam diu parturiens, nihil pariens. [On this feast of Saturnalia, to humor the illustrious Ambrosio Visconti I composed a book of epigrams, to which I have given the title Emblemata: because with each epigram I describe something from history or nature so as to signify something elegant, whence painters, goldsmiths and founders can make the sort of things we call badges and fasten them to hats or which we call trademarks such as the anchor of Aldus, the dove of Froben and the elephant of Calvi, so long in labor but producing nothing].

Alciato offers then new witness to the deep echo of the treatment of hieroglyphics by Erasmus among his contemporaries in the *Adagia* and he alludes to the hieroglyphics of Aldus and Froben, while the elephant of Calvi is a jibe referring to the sluggishness of his friend, who was frequently taken advantage of in his business affairs.^{xxi} For the rest, the dove and other hieroglyphs taken from other works published by Froben, subjects that Erasmus had discussed in successive editions of the *Adagia* which Froben always published, sought to enrich the previous discussions on the printer's mark of this editor.^{xxii} In the aforementioned *De verborum significatione* Alciato recalls the sources of his emblematics, beyond Horapollon and even Chaeremon and from this it follows that he must have meant the work of Colonna, whose hieroglyphs Erasmus had indeed attributed to Chaeremon.

In the lines which Alciato dedicated to the imperial advisor Peutinger in the introduction to the first edition printed at Augsburg by H. Steyner on February 28 of 1531,⁵¹ then repro-

⁵⁰ Alciato often names members of the Visconti family in his letters to Calvi. Usually they are mentioned in relation to the books in the rich library of this family, as for example in the letters of September 26 and December 19, 1520. In these letters Alciato proposes to Calvi to dedicate to one of the Viscontis a book with a pompous title to curry favor with this person.

⁵¹ This edition is entitled *Viri Clarissimi D. Andree Alciati Jurisconsultiss. Mediol. ad D. Chonradum Peutingerii Augustanum, Jurisconsultum Emblematum Liber*. MDXXXI, while the colophon bears the following words: "Excusum Augustae Vindelicorum per Heynricum Steynerum die 28. Februarij. M. D. XXXI". Under the mistaken impression that the letter contained in the collection of Gude is dated December 9, 1522, it has long been thought that there was a Milan edition of 1522, and that of Steyner was the second. Only further research conducted with amazing perseverance by Green have shown that this assumption is unfounded, see Green cit., pp. 103 ff.

^{xx} This clause, which is often omitted in translations of this passage in the emblem literature, does not categorically say that the book of epigrams was dedicated to Visconti as Giehlow suggests later. Searches for this 1522 edition particularly by Green have all proved fruitless. The coat of arms of the Visconti, a snake swallowing (or giving birth to) a child is also shown as Emblem 1 of the *Emblemata*. The Visconti were succeeded as rulers of Milan by the Sforzas in 1450 and the Sforza's arms were the imperial eagle quartered with the snake of the Visconti. In 1522 Milan was ruled by Francesco II Sforza not by a Visconti. In the first edition of the *Emblemata* of 1531 the name of the Duke is not mentioned but in the 1534 and subsequent editions his name is given as Maximilian whose rule over Milan ended in 1515. The origin of the snake, said to be a grass-snake or biscia in Italian, may have arisen from one early spelling of the Visconti name as "Bisconti".

^{xxi} See above ch. 7 nt. 48.

^{xxii} In respect of the mark of Aldus see above, pp. 113ff.

duced in almost all subsequent editions, he clearly expresses an intention to teach artists “tacitis notis scribere” [to write in silent signs], suggesting that they take hieroglyphs as their model. He reverts thus, in the following hexameters, to the ideas that he has previously expressed:

Dum pueros juglans, juvenes dum tessera fallit,
 Detinet et segnes chartula picta viros
 Haec nos festivis emblemata cudimus horis
 Artificum illustri signaque facta manu,
 Vestibus ut torulos petasis ut figere parmas
 Et valeat tacitis scribere quisque notis.
 Et tibi supremus praetiosa nomismata Caesar
 Et veterum eximias donet habere manus;
 Ipse dabo vati chartacea munera vates,
 Quae Chonrade mei pignus amoris habe.

[While boys the nuts beguile and youths the dice
 And sluggish men the figured board detain
 For festive hours each emblem and device
 We forge, that artist's hand illustrious feigns,
 As some on gowns have skill the tufts to weave,
 And some to fashion shields with borders wide
 So work most pressing others idly leave
 In silent notes to write from tide to tide.
 Caesar supreme rich coins on thee bestows
 And choicest works of skill from ancient days,
 I will a poet give a poet's vows
 And, Chonrad, of my love this pledge I pay.]^{xxiii}

^{xxiii} This florid translation is from Henry Green cit., p. 14. Green's fifth and sixth lines have also been translated as “To fix badges on clothes or shields on caps.”

Taken with his earlier statements the dedication leaves no doubt that the emblematic poetry of Alciato derived from the study of hieroglyphics and had the effect of diffusing knowledge of them. However, it remains doubtful as to when he actually started to devote his poetic talent to the topic. The letter addressed to Calvi from Milan in which Alciato speaks of writing a little book entitled *Emblemata*, is dated December 9, 1521, and the treatise *De verborum significatione*, published in 1530, was finished in approximately the same period.⁵² However, that he used the term “composui” [I composed] does not necessarily mean that Alciato had already composed all the epigrams at that time. The reference could in fact refer to a previous collection of poems focused on hieroglyphics.

⁵² About these dates, see the notes on pp. 254 ff. above.

This is what is most likely to have occurred but the hypothesis is also confirmed by Alessandro Grimaldi, a contemporary who was appointed to give the funeral oration for Alciato. Grimaldi specifically praises Alciato for having learned “*poesim aenigmate plenam*” [poetry full of enigmas] already “*intra primum iuventutis limen*” [at the threshold of his youth] after having composed “*adhuc adolescens*” [while youthful] speeches full of “*concinnae et acutae sententiae*,” [concise and witty remarks] especially admirable if you think of the age at which they were written.^{xxiv} On the other hand, Alciato himself admits that he tried his hand even as a “*puer*” [boy] at poetry which, however, would not subsequently be greatly appreciated.^{xxv} The beginning of his activities as a poet must therefore go back to early youth, but even so it does not yield a precise indication of when he started to create hieroglyphic epigrams with the specific intention of composing a collection that would also serve as a model for artistic purposes. The question of whether this occurred only after reading the *Declaratio sacrarum literarum* of Fasanini or earlier, so that the Bolognese humanist would have to strengthen the jurist in his resolve, is a matter which still remains unsettled.

Perhaps the latter is the more likely alternative. In fact Alciato, born in Alzate on 8 May 1492, after having conducted his first studies in Milan, then attended law school at Pavia, subsequently graduating at Bologna, and in 1518 before obtaining a teaching post in Avignon, had returned often to the circle of Milanese scholars who were certainly not humanists any the less interested in the study of hieroglyphs. If we accept that Alciato thanks to Fasanini founded emblematic poetry, the fact remains that the lawyer could have studied hieroglyphics before he became familiar with what the elder scholar in Bologna had prepared on this subject

In fact the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo was circulated in Milan even earlier than in other places. Actually Francesco Filelfo and Demetrios Chalcondylas both of whom had lived for years in this city, were among the few who knew the text of Horapollo as early as the fifteenth century.^{xxvi} Of course, further investigation will be necessary into the achievements of the great Leonardo on hieroglyphics but the fact remains that the fifteen years of his stay at the court of Ludovico il Moro and his frequent visits to Milan after the fall of the latter, might reveal that the artist prepared here some enigmatic images which are still difficult to interpret.⁵³

⁵³ See above p. 70.

^{xxiv} This and the following two notes are from the Aragno edition, cit. “Grimaldi gave the speech in the Cathedral of Pavia on January 19, 1550. In the same year the oration was printed by Franciscus Moschenus and republished in 1871 by the Holbein Society. Then there appeared the funeral honorific of Petrus Varondellus, see Green cit., Appendix 2., p. 287, which states that he “ante 16 annum” had been able “elegias, comoedias, epigrammata jam felicissime componere poetices numeros et omnes naturae bonitate implere”.

^{xxv} See Gude cit., The letter of 21 January 1520 in which Alciato responds to the criticism of Calvi because some poems were published together with “*Teutonicis illis ineptiis*” and apologizes in the following words: “*dicam tibi, quid in re sit; quo tempore mihi Bonifacius Amorbachius Avenione dabat, - agitur, opinor, octavus annus - excerpserat ex autographis meis illa omnia, quae deinde, ut Bebellii officinam adjuvaret, ei imprimenda communicavit, idque me inconsulto. Tuli id non satis aequo animo; quod pleraque in eis erant a me tunc puero edita, quae famae nocere potuissent, nisi legali doctrina hosce omnes naevos discussissem*”.

^{xxvi} See above, p. 44 nt. 24 (for Filelfo) and p. 51 (for Chalcondylas).

It is not possible to ascertain whether or not Alciato knew Leonardo. However, the latter would certainly have heard of the existence of the mysterious *Hieroglyphica* from his professor, Parrhasius [Parrasio], who had introduced him to scientific studies and in particular to knowledge of Greek. Parrhasius was in fact the son-in-law of Chalcondylas and still resided in Milan when the first edition of Horapollon came from Venice to that Lombard city.⁵⁴ This must have happened quite early on, since Jacopo Antiquario, who previously had been secretary of the Sforza, was a great friend of Aldus. The latter dedicated Plutarch's *Moralia* to Antiquario in 1509.

However neither the treatise *De Iside et Osiride*, also contained in this last volume, nor the text of Horapollon were then being studied by the scholars in Milan. It's hard to imagine that Alciato, who had at the time just begun his study of Greek, could have attempted the translation of these literary puzzles, which defeated even the best Greek scholars. As a law student he would have felt more attracted to Greek passages from the *Corpus iuris* than from the Horapollon. This leads us to suppose that at the time of his university studies, particularly when you consider the limited amount of his free time, Alciato had only a general and superficial knowledge of the Horapollon.

However, our author would soon have become aware of the contents of the *Hypnerotomachia*. Although he was a bibliophile from an early age, even if he had not owned a copy of Colonna's book,⁵⁵ it would have been available through the library of Jean Grolier, a lover of books, a celebrated patron of the sciences, more than thirteen years older than him,^{xxvii} and soon to become his friend after having previously been his patron as is attested both from the greeting with which Rhenanus addresses both of them and from the affirmation of Alciato himself. Since the time of the French occupation Grolier had lived mainly in Milan succeeding his father in the management of his business affairs and at the same time continuing to devote himself passionately to books.^{xxviii} There are at least three copies of the *Hypnerotomachia*, one of which is printed on parchment, which still carry the famous stamp, *ex-libris* "J. Grolierii et amicorum" [belonging to J. Grolier and friends], which is certainly not an expression deprived of significance.⁵⁶

^{xxvii} Grolier is now believed to have been born in 1489 or 1490 which would make him almost the contemporary of Alciato.

^{xxviii} This is not quite correct since during this time Jean Grolier was studying at the University of Paris and then was appointed as one of the King of France's notaries or secretaries and accompanied him on the royal progresses round France. See Guignard, 'A Propos d'un Grolier inédit: La date des reliures a plaquettes. Etienne ou Jean Grolier', *Mélange d'Histoire du Livre et des Bibliothèques*, Paris: 1960. Grolier inherited his father's position as paymaster of the French armies in Milan in late summer 1509 but from the inscription in the *Adagia*, "Aldus himself stayed with us", it certainly sounds like Jean Grolier was present at the meeting with Aldus in late 1508. In the archives of the Grolier Club, in New York, there is a letter from Louis XII of France dated September 15th 1509 addressed to Jean Grolier in his capacity as Treasurer of Milan.

⁵⁴ See Tiraboschi cit., vol. XII, pp. 31 ff.

⁵⁵ Alciato writes on December 19, 1520 to Calvi that he had worked "in prima rudimentorum infantia", to Parrhasius "Juvenalis satyras manuscriptas et vetustissimas". Moving to Avignon, he left his entire library in Milan, see Gude cit., the letter of October 1518.

Only after the first edition of the *Adagia* arrived in Milan, did the attention of the Milanese humanist turn particularly to the work of Colonna. On the other hand it was Aldus himself who explained to his friends the origin of his famous mark derived from the copy of the coin of Titus given to him by Bembo. Grolier, who in his turn was an avid collector of coins, was interested to the extent of copying this silver coin in the margin of his copy of the *Adagia*, by adding an annotation to the image that even today is proof of the visit that Aldus had made.⁵⁷

The arrival of the famous printer in Milan was a sensation. His host, Antiquario, composed a endecasillabus [eleven line epigram] in his honor, ending with the joyous exclamation:

“Aldus venit en, Aldus ecce venit”.
[Aldus is coming. Lo, Aldus is coming].

The news of the discussions engaged in by Aldus would soon have reached nearby Pavia, even assuming that he did not himself visit his clients there. And at Pavia, from the age of fifteen, Alciato attended lectures by the famous jurist Giasone dal Maino. The latter, like Antiquario, had been a follower of Ludovico il Moro and had accompanied the latter's daughter Bianca to Innsbruck for the marriage with Maximilian I but then had passed over to the French, especially after Louis XII had granted him special honors at Pavia during the victorious campaign of 1507 launched by Genoa. Giasone had good relations with Grolier, and Alciato, protégé and confidante of Giasone, would certainly have benefited from these ties.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ See Le Roux de Lincy, *Recherches sur Jean Grolier, sur la vie et sa Bibliothèque*, Paris 1866, pp. 68, 86 and 262 for Grolier's examples of the Poliphilo. With regard to the relationship between Alciato and Grolier, see Calvi's letter of September 26, 1520, in which he expresses the intention to dedicate to Grolier his own *Annotationes in Ausonium* and the letter of February 9, 1519 from Rhenanus to Calvi, where the first ends with the following words: “commenda me incomparabili virtutis et literarum decori S. Jo. Groliero et Andreae Alciato”; see Gude cit., pp. 78 and 151.

⁵⁷ Aldus' stay in Milan was between September 1508, the moment when the *Adagia* was issued and March 1509, when he published together both the *Moralia* and his thanks for the hospitality of Antiquario he had received in Milan. In the dedication of the edition of the *Adagia* of 1508, see Le Roux de Lincy cit., p. 212, we read: “Ex eodem numismate, cujus nobis ipse Aldus, cum Mediolani apud nos esset, copiam fecit, hoc exemplar deductum propriam et inscriptam hic effigiem refert fidelissime. Jo. Grolierius, Lugdunensis”. This copy has been reproduced recently by Dorez, *Etudes Aldines I.* cit., p. 147, according to an illustration in the “Gazette des Beaux Arts”, XVII (1876), p. 565. Dorez, *Etudes Aldines I.* cit., p. 158, suggests that Aldus was in Milan only in 1508.

⁵⁸ On Giasone dal Maino see Tiraboschi cit., vol. XIV, pp. 754 ff. In his *Par-*

The young lawyer would have learned from reading the *Adagia* the fundamental characteristics of hieroglyphics, of which he would have noticed from the time of his first legal studies in Pavia the unusual difference in relation to the interpretative rules of Roman law. This led him to believe, based on Colonna, that hieroglyphs would be discovered in symbols on coins and that he should try to decipher them. It was thus probably some Roman imperial silver coins which gave him the inspiration for the motto of his professor “Virtuti fortuna comes” [Fortune is the companion of virtue], placed above Giasone’s entrance door in Pavia, in the form of a caduceus between two cornucopia^{59,xxix}. We must remember in fact that after the invasion of Charles VIII and even more that of Louis XII, in Milan especially it was customary to invent Devices after the example of the magnificent French knights who had the fashion to adopt such symbols to adorn themselves and their followers.⁶⁰ They had

^{xxix} The motto and the caduceus between two cornucopia was also Alciato’s personal device which appears in all editions of his *Emblemata* (for instance in the 1534 edition fol. B3v; the first edition does not have the cornucopia). See Robin Raybould, ‘A Note on Alciato’s Device from the 1577 Edition of the *Emblemata*’, *Emblematica*, 18 (2010) pp. 295 ff.



Fig. 32 *Virtuti comes fortuna*, Alciato’s device from the *Emblematum Liber* of 1534

erga Juris, bk. 5, ch. 26, Aldus writes as follows: “Jasoni, quod mihi praeceptor et communiceps atque etiam non vulgari familiaritate conjunctus fuisset”.

⁵⁹ See nt. 58 .

⁶⁰ See *Ragionamento di Mons. Paolo Giovio sopra i motti et disegni d’arme et d’amore, che communemente chiamano imprese, con un discorso di Girolamo Ruscelli, intorno allo stesso*,

not lost the memory of the golden embroidery adopted in Genoa by Louis XII, in particular of *un roi d'abeilles* surrounded by a swarm of bees and accompanied by the words “non utitur aculco rex, cui paremus” [the king who commands us does not use his sting]. In this case the analogy with the hieroglyph described by the ancients was obvious, and can only be described as emulation.⁶¹

As reported by his friend Giovio,^{xxx} Alciato composed a motto for his professor but used only the image, while it appeared on his medal and inscribed on his own tomb in the cathedral of Pavia with the words: ΑΝΔΡΟΣ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΚΑΡΠΟΣ ΟΥΚ ΑΠΟΛΛΑΤΑΙ [he fruit of the just man will not perish].^{xxxi} Who knows whether the young student even composed the epigram demonstrating the characteristics of a hieroglyph that gives meaning to a phrase, an epigram that appears in the first edition of the *Emblemata* with the enigmatic verses:

Anguibus implicitis geminis caduceus alis
Inter Amaltheae cornua rectus adest;
Pollentes sic mente viros fandique peritos
Indicat, ut rerum copia omnia beet.^{62,xxxii}

[The caduceus, with entwined snakes and twin wings,
stands upright between the horns of Amalthea.
It thus indicates how material wealth
blesses men of powerful intellect, skilled in speaking.]

It is possible that the predicate “rectus” suggests the wording of Erasmus, when he describes the mark of Froben, although this is contradicted by the fact that the *Adagia* were only published in Basel at a later date.^{xxxiii} The precocious tendency of Alciato to concentrate on epigrammatic poetry does not however make this assumption entirely unlikely.

Venetia 1556. On p. 10 are the remarks on Giasone's motto, on p. 5 the passage on the diffusion of devices, „but in our times after the arrival of King Charles VIII and of Louis XII in Italy everyone, who followed the army imitated the French captains and tried to adorn themselves with beautiful and pompous devices”.

⁶¹ See Mrs. Bury Palliser, *Historic devices, badges and war-cries*, London 1870, p. 112. Following Montfaucon it is possible that the inscription was just, “non utitur aculco rex”. *La Grande Encyclopédie*, under *Devise*, provides the version mentioned above. For the hieroglyph of the bee for a monarch in Ammianus, see above, p. 41. In the popular interpretation of Biondo, *Roma Istaurota* cit., see above p. 45, the passage reads: “per speciem apis mella conficientis indicant regem, moderationi cum jocunditate aculeos quoque innasci debere his signis ostendentes”. In Horapollo I.62 the bee represents the image of the people who obey the monarch.

^{xxx} See Giovio cit., Lyon: Roviglio ed. p. 13.

^{xxxi} Also inscribed on his tomb was the Greek motto, ΜΗΔΕΝ ΑΝΑΒΑΛΛΟΜΕΝΟΣ, “do not procrastinate”, the Alciato family motto and both this and the picture of an elk (latin = alces) comprise Alciato's Emblem 3. It is no doubt a coincidence that the Greek word used in this motto *anaballomenos* comes from the same root as the Greek root of emblem or *emballein*.

^{xxxii} Emblem 89 in the Tozzi 1621 edition. All subsequent references to the *Emblemata* are to this edition and translations of the epigrams are from the Glasgow University website: [http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/\(6/29/2012\)](http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/(6/29/2012)).

^{xxxiii} The first edition of the *Adagia* printed by Froben in Basel in 1513 was actually unauthorized and said to have been issued deliberately to attract Erasmus' attention and thus his future business. But this date must be earlier than the composition of the *Emblemata*.

In these lines we may be able to see an early example of both the content and form of emblematic poetry. But one should have doubts as to whether Alciato is the founder of this particular literary genre. Indeed, this example is just a particular choice of hieroglyphs and their composition in verse, a choice that does not prove in any way that he had the idea of providing artists with a reference model. Indeed, such a hypothesis contradicts his statements first mentioned, according to which this trend, although essential for the development of emblematics, arose not only on the basis of studies of the *Hypnerotomachia* but also thanks to the text of Horapollon. It is difficult to imagine that Alciato had a thorough knowledge of this author when he was in Pavia and that he composed the motto in the form of a hieroglyph. The idea of naming his enigmatic compositions *Emblemata*, thus indicating a conscious goal that was intended for his epigrams, must have come to him at a later time.^{xxxiv}

^{xxxiv} It is said that in another letter to Calvi from 1523, Alciato refers to the existence of texts, not his own, called *Emblemata*, written by one Albutius but these texts have never been found. However I have not been able to locate this reference in the letters of the Gude Collection; see above ch. 7 nt. 42.

Almost certainly it was his law studies undertaken at the time under Giasone that clarified the term “symbol” for the young Andrea. But earlier, in his reading of the *Hypnerotomachia*, Alciato had been struck by the term “*emblematura*.”⁶³ In the juridical field, just in the period when in Pavia our author began to study Roman law, the *Annotationes Pandectarum* by Guillaume Budé published in 1508 was beginning to be circulated. Alciato always showed the utmost regard for the treatise of this outstanding French humanist with whom he would later come on good terms, and he even tried to make some improvements to the work so that it might serve as a model for an apprentice lawyer. If the term “emblem” was not already clear from a separate study of the Digest, because it met the particular provisions on the establishment of a legacy (Digest, lib. XXXIV, tit. II, lex. 32) and for the preparation for a lawsuit (Digest lib. X, tit. IV lex 7), this must have been made so following the interpretation of Budé, where there is an extensive commentary on the words “*vel ansa scypho injunxeris vel emblemata phialai*” [you will affix handles to goblets or emblems to cups].^{64, xxxv}

^{xxxv} This quotation by Giehlow comes directly from the passage cited in the Digest. The section is on “an action for production” and production is defined as “to grant the plaintiff access to something in public so that he may be enabled to go to law;” thus access to any object including *emblemata* which the plaintiff wishes to prove belongs to him

⁶² See Alciato *Emblemata*, Augsburg, 1531, fol. B. The woodcut does not represent the cornucopia but naively only real goats’ horns. Only in the French editions is the emblem shown in accordance with ancient coins.

⁶³ See above, p. 147 and Albutius may have been a pen name for Alciato himself. See E. Klecker *Des signes muets aux emblèmes chanteurs* (www.cairn.info/revue-litterature-2007-1-page-23)

⁶⁴ See fol. C^v in the annotated edition of *Annotationes in quattuor et viginti pandectarum libros*, which appeared in 1526. This printed copy, preserved in the library of the court of Vienna, belonged to the humanist Joannes Brassicanus, a friend of Rhenanus, who provided notes in the margin. With regard to the relationship between Alciato and Budé, see his letter to Calvi from Avignon on January 21, 1520 incorrectly dated 1521 by Gude cit.

Budé defines this term first and foremost as a “vermiculatum opus ex tessellis insititiis aptum atque consertum” [inlaid work correctly and carefully installed with mosaic] thus a mosaic work for which Colonna had also adopted the term “emblematura”. But the word also indicates a removable metallic ornament attached to a container. In this respect Budé observes: “Emblemata etiam in vasis argenteis aureisque et Corinthiis ornamenta erant apud antiquos, exemptilia, cum libitum erat, cuiusmodi aetas ista non novit, ut arbitror”. [Emblemata were also in ancient times ornaments fixed on vessels of silver and gold and from Corinth, that is removable if you wished, of which the age I believe is not known]. To these two definitions, which are translated from Cicero, the author adds a reference from Fabianus, who had compared the “emblemata” to the citations that adorn discourse.⁶⁵

From these extracts it is clear that Alciato considerably extended, both literally and metaphorically, the classical meaning of the word “emblem”. He believed that even shields or plaques of bronze or noble metals, embossed, or cast, and those which were used to decorate clothing and headgear, could in some sense be considered moveable ornaments. He also included in the term printers’ marks based on the use of the distinctive signs pasted on library books and did not hesitate, finally, to give this definition to almost any pictorial ornament for which he had some inspiration in hieroglyphic form. His *Emblemata* demonstrates artistic technique, while at the same time alluding metaphorically not only to specific verbal expressions but even to the epigrams themselves. In short, Alciato does derive the word emblem from its original function.⁶⁶

Such extensions of meaning beyond the classical use of the word correspond to the conclusions which Fasanini had reached from his study of Horapollo.⁶⁷ On the other hand, it would not be easy to find another term to fully express the different types of

⁶⁵ The passage quoted by Budé is in *Brutus*, 79, 274; *Lucilius apud Oratorem*, 44 and in *Verrem* act. 5; that of Fabianus is from book II of his *Luctitatio oratoria*. Regarding the “loci communes” of speech one reads: “hoc adeo manifestum est, ad forenses actiones pertinere, ut quidam nec ignobiles in officiis civilibus scriptos eos memoriaeque diligentissimae mandatos in promptu habuerint, ut, quoties esset occasio, extemporales eorum dictiones his velut emblematis exornarentur”.

⁶⁶ As far as I can ascertain Guillaume Roville drew attention to the dependence of Alciato on Budé in his preface to the Latin edition of the *Emblemata* of 1548, when Alciato was still alive.

⁶⁷ See above pp. 236 ff.

decoration for which the Bolognese humanist scholar wished to employ the hieroglyph. It can be assumed therefore that, in pursuing his studies on hieroglyphics, Alciato ended up giving the “emblem” a broader meaning than just that derived from the suggestion of Fasanini. Nevertheless, it is probable also that, claiming he was driven by “apud hieroglyphica Horum” [the hieroglyphs of Horus] to give poetic form to emblems, that is hieroglyphic epigrams for the use of artists, he would be relying on the studies which Fasanini had undertaken. In fact, just as the latter does not explicitly quote his sources in the “*Declaratio sacrarum literarum*,” Alciato, who does not even mention the *Hypnerotomachia* of Colonna, similarly omits them. Moreover, a detailed comparison between the translation of Fasanini and the *Emblemata* confirms these assumptions. That Alciato had no hesitation in his verse in taking to the letter the phraseology of the learned Bolognese is obvious enough. We will try to briefly demonstrate a few examples.

In the epigram describing the crows as a symbol of “Concordia” [harmony], Alciato writes:

Cornicum mira inter se concordia vitae est,

[The harmony between crows as they live together
is a wonder: Emblem 38]

while the translation made by Fasanini of Horapollo of the equivalent hieroglyph, says: “hujus mirae inter cornices concordiae gratia: [the goodwill and harmony amongst crows is a wonder].⁶⁸ Similarly, Alciato copies Fasanini in the emblem “gratiam referendum,” [returning thanks] deriving it from the hieroglyph of the stork. According to Horapollo it means in fact “patricola” [worship of a father?]. Fasanini had however noted that the term ἀντιπελαργεῖν was a proverbial expression denoting “gratiam retribuere” [to repay a favor].⁶⁹ This note had evidently

⁶⁸ See Alciato cit., fol. A4, and Fasanini cit, bk. I, ch. VII, fol. IV [Horapollo, 1.8].

⁶⁹ See Alciato cit., Fol. A4: “Aerio insignis pietate ciconia nido/ investes pullos pignora grata foveat/ Taliaque expectat sibi munera mutua reddi./ Auxilio hoc quoties mater egebit anus,/ Nec pia spem soboles fallit, sed fessa parentum/ corpora fert humeris praestat et ore cibos”. Fasanini cit., fol. XXXI (erroneously listed as fol. XXXII), bk. II, ch. LVII [Horapollo II.58] translates the short Greek text ὑπὸ γὰρ τῶν γεννησάντων ἐκτραφεῖς οὐ χωρίζεται τῶν ἰδίων πατέρων, ἀλλὰ παραμένει αὐτοῖς ἐσχάτου γήρως. θεραπείαν αὐτοῖς ἀπονέμων with the following words: “Illa enim a parentibus educata, scorsum ab eis numquam recedit, sed grata memorque educationis tenerae gratiam parentibus rependit usque ad eorum senectutem continue cum eis manens et ad extremum usque vitae obsequium illis praestans”.

influenced the motto of the emblem whose explanatory verses strongly echo the reasoning behind the very free translation of the Bolognese scholar. A no less clear demonstration of how Alciato used this translation of Horapollo is given finally by a second emblem depicting harmony, where the epigram reads:

Mos fuit in partes turmls coeuntibus hasdem
 Conjunctas dextras mutua dona dare
 Foederis haec species, id habet concordia signum
 Ut quos jungit amor, jungit ipsa manus.

[It was the custom for squadrons coming together on the same side to exchange joined right hands as gifts. This is a token of alliance; concord has this for a sign those whom affection joins, the hand joins also. Emblem 39]

The hieroglyph for “duo homines qui sese circumplexi dexteris excipiant” [two men who exchange joined right hands] poetically described in these verses, is found only in Fasanini because Trebazio translates the relevant passage of Horapollo with “duo homines magistratus insignia induti” [two men dressed with the insignia of magistrates]. Fasanini must have found the term δεξιούμενοι in his old manuscript while Trebazio had before him only the word ἀξιούμενοι from the Aldine edition.⁷⁰

It is therefore legitimate to ask: when did Alciato become so greatly attracted to the hieroglyphic interpretations of Fasanini? Maybe after the translation of the Horapollo had become known, early in its circulation, that is not before the second half of 1517 when he was in Milan. Or may be his knowledge dates back to an earlier period, when Alciato was still in Bologna, where he received his doctorate in 1514? A later origin of the emblems would presuppose knowledge of the Latin text. But Alciato could already have learnt of some details of the *Hieroglyphica* from the lectures of Fasanini, which would later be incorporated into the printed translation. It is conceivable that Andrea, who from his Paduan period was interested to hieroglyphics, had followed the lectures of the humanist at that time. Perhaps Alciato was already in Bologna in 1511. Surely then he attended the university in 1512, that is in the same period in which Fasanini had successfully begun his academic career.⁷¹

⁷⁰ See Alciato cit., fol. B4 and Fasanini cit., bk. I, ch. XI, p. XXIV^v [Horapollo II.11]. With regard to the different readings see the position of Leemans cit., p. 308.

⁷¹ Regarding the activities of the teaching of Fasanini see pp. 239 ff.

And even assuming that his work on the last three volumes of the Code of Justinian, published on January 5 1513,⁷² and his examinations prevented Alciato from attending the lectures of Fasanini, he nevertheless had to know the latter's ideas about the importance and the use of Horapollo. As we noted above, the Bolognese humanist had awakened the interest of local poets; he was considered by them a kind of oracle in regard to the hieroglyphs and they were always accustomed to turn to him for advice. Even Andrea, with his poetic vein, had to be initiated into the complex of ideas through which the Bolognese professor of poetry attempted to enrich poetry and to reform the visual arts.

Alciato was therefore urged to put his talents to serve this purpose, if not directly by Fasanini at least by the circle that was strongly influenced by the learned Bolognese. And when, in the epigram dedicated as the motto of Giasone dal Maino as well as in other verse hieroglyphs, he made the start of a collection of ideal models for artists, he ended up by transforming them into the artifice of emblematic poetry.

When Ambrosio Visconti asked Alciato to dedicate to him some emblematic poetry, the humanist did not therefore have to try some novel composition since he already appreciated the strange hieroglyph content of his epigrams.

☛ *The hieroglyphic studies of Alciato in Milan after his return from the University of Bologna and the Emblemata*

The *Libellus*, the little book, of Alciato in which he had put together his own emblematic compositions over the Christmas period of 1521, has unfortunately been lost, a fact made all the

⁷² The *Annotationes in tres posteriores Justiniani Codicis libros* appeared, according to the general opinion of biographers, in 1513 in Bologna, so that the dedication "Nonis januariis 1514" reprinted in Strasburg in 1515 must be considered a printer's error. Here Alciato claims to have finished the job "non plus dimidio mense". If we take into account the time required for publication, the work must have been completed at the latest at the beginning of the winter of 1512 and specifically in Bologna, as is apparent from the place of printing. However, if it were true as Tiraboschi cit. writes (vol. XIV, p. 758), according to which, as Panciroli also mentions, Giasone's mental condition had forced him to stop teaching in 1511, Alciato had just changed universities in this period moving from Pavia to Bologna. Here he must have had the opportunity of hearing Carlo Ruini, who also arrived there in 1511; see Fantuzzi cit., vol. III. Also at that time a certain Giacomo Fasanini who is recorded in the College of Judges of civil and canon law taught law in Bologna. Giacomo, a relative of Filippo Fasanini, remained in Bologna from 1510 to 1532-33, see *ibid.*, p. 302 and Mazzetti cit., p. 122. It is possible that thanks to this law professor Alciato had additional opportunities for contact with Filippo.

more deplorable since it can be supposed that the epigrams were composed in part during the first decade of the sixteenth century.^{xxxvi} Thus the text must have also reflected the fact that it was written shortly after the publication of the *Hypnerotomachia* for which Colonna had composed his hieroglyphs on the basis of new written sources to which access was possible at the time. Furthermore, the *Libellus* was also a highly appropriate medium to interpret the symbolic representations which at the time existed not only in Italy but even beyond the Alps. Alciato's interest in the Egyptian antiquities arose in fact from the university, where scholars from the Nordic countries were becoming more and more numerous. He himself worked on his compositions amongst the Milanese humanists, who exercised considerable influence on the French by virtue of their ties with the French rulers, and on the Germans, thanks to their links with Basel.

Again we are forced to reconstruct the contents of a lost text, an undertaking which is desirable only to determine whether and to what extent the collection given to Visconti constitutes a part of the one hundred and four *Emblemata* of Alciato published by Steyner in Augsburg in 1531.⁷³ If we consider his poetic activity up to that date, it is in fact possible to establish a link between the lost *Libellus* and the printed work, while from the number of published emblems some firm points can be established with respect to the setting and the extent of Alciato's studies of hieroglyphics, especially when he was still in Milan.

As is explained in a letter dated December 19, 1520, on his return from Bologna he had devoted himself to poetry with particular zeal.⁷⁴ At that time (1514-1518) he thought of publishing the

^{xxxvi} Alciato would have been only eight years old in 1500 so any publishable epigrams must have been written towards the end of that decade.

⁷³ The dominant assumption, according to which the first collection would include one hundred emblems, is based on a hypothesis of Mazzuchelli cit., p. 336, who had learned of this through the quoted passage from the letter, but it does not reveal anything about number of emblems. Nevertheless Green writes that edition of Augsburg of 1531 "is substantially identical to the first composed in Milan, that consisted of one hundred subjects". Green then subtracts from this first edition four emblems, whose composition is shifted to 1522 (only in one case is he fully convinced), see Green cit., pp. 9, 12 and 105. The question is not so easy to clarify.

⁷⁴ See the collection of letters of Gude, p. 84: "Epigrammatum latinorum collectanea discupio videre et in eis iudicio quocunque meo uti nec tibi persuadeas asymbolum (with respect to this term, see Beroaldo above, ch. 6 nt. 16) me futurum habeo enim licet pauca, quae vel cum antiquis certent. Sed huius rei omnibus studiosis penuria facienda est, nec temere in eo alicuius nomen describendum, praeter quam qui vel eruditissimus vel Calvinii nominis observantissimus habeatur. Perlegi, cum Mediolani essem, quam plurimos ex recentioribus istis poetis, ut inde aliqua eligerem, quae in centonem illum

^{xxxvii} Filippo Beroaldo in his short treatise on the Pythagorean symbols *Symbola Pythagorae Mystica, aurea sacrosancta* (Lyon 1502) defines asymbolum in the context of a symbolum meaning a ticket or entrance pass to a feast where someone who brings nothing to the festivities and is thus a cheap-skate is described as "asymbolum".

^{xxxviii} Alciato coedited this edition with Janus Cornarius and provided translations of 153 of the epigrams. They are taken, as the title says, from seven books of epigrams. Thirty-one of the emblems in the first edition of the *Emblemata* are taken from the Greek Anthology; see <http://www.mun.ca/alciato/greek.html> (6/30/2012)

best of what had been written at the time in the field of Latin epigrams. To this end he widened his studies of contemporary poetry⁷⁵ and managed to interest his friend Calvi, who wanted all the more to have the *Collectanea epigrammatum latinorum* published because of his own contribution. "Nec tibi persuadeas, asymbolum^{xxxvii} me futurum. Habeo enim licet pauca, quae vel cum antiquis certent" [You will not convince me that I shall be miserly (about this) for I have a few things, which may vie with the ancients]; Alciato writes in the letter referred to, where the word "pauca" scarcely masks his vanity. In April 1523, he announced that he had at home no less than four books of epigrams "ex poeticis studiis" [from his studies of poetry] ready for the press.⁷⁶

This collection was put together shortly after the *Emblemata*. It represents his individual choices from material that had to be quite broad, since after the proposal for an anthology of modern epigrams collapsed, probably because of delays caused by Calvi,⁷⁷ Alciato had had printed in Basel in 1529^{78,xxxviii} a translation of Greek epigrams derived from the anthology of Aldus which probably accounted for his contribution to that collection. The work, completed in the spring of 1523, probably included, together with the volume of the *Emblemata* of Christmas 1521, those epigrams that Alciato had previ-

infarcirentur. Ita me Deus amet, ut ex quamplurimis nec unum quidem epigramma reperi iudicio tuo dignum. Quapropter iratus malis poetis, quorum libros, dum pervolvo, tantum temporis frustra contrivissem, in carmen ipse quamvis ineptum (sed cur tibi famialiter quicquid in buccam venit, non scribem) prorupi". Then follows a poem with a very strong tone.

⁷⁵ In a letter dated September 26, 1520, he describes the program of his collection in general, as "recentiorum istorum vatum bibliothecas" while in the letter of 4 October of that year he cites individual poets: "Posses ex Phoedri heredibus habere, ex Bembo, Beroaldo Juniore, Anselmo Georgio, Nicola Archicomite, Andrea Nauclerio, Sannazaro et si quis alios idoneos judicaveris. Ipse quaedam collegi tibi non displicitura".

⁷⁶ See the collection of letters of Gude cit., p. 99. After "editioni praeparata opera" is read "ex poeticis studiis epigrammatum libri quatuor".

⁷⁷ See on this above, pp. 257 ff. Alciato had continually pressed Calvi, see for example the letter of 7 May 1521: "vellem mitteres ad me omnia epigrammata, quae in librum redigenda censeo, ut opus tandem absolvamus. Ardeo enim hoc desiderio".

⁷⁸ See in this respect Mazzuchelli cit., p. 369. As Alciato noted addressing Calvi in the letter of September 3, he gave to Bebel, the Basel printer, the edition "epigrammatum Graecorum ferraginem, quam ad te (Calvum) mittendam curabo" which refers precisely to this text. Unfortunately I have not been able to consult this rare book. However, it is very likely that the translations of Alciato published in subsequent editions of Aldus's anthology come from this work, except those taken directly from the *Emblemata*.

ously composed that he believed deserved to be published.⁷⁹

When our author dedicated the *Emblemata* to Peutinger, it's hard to see that he could have made use of poems dating from before 1522 except those collected for Visconti. Alciato could only choose between the latter and those that followed. The first emblems of the Steyner edition, for instance the motto for Giasone dal Maino, had to be part of the first collection. Perhaps Alciato did not want to rework them when it was decided to include them in the collection dedicated to Peutinger. Moreover, in the treatise *De verborum significatione*, which appeared in the same period in which the author was considering whether to dedicate his work to Peutinger, he refers just to a "Libellus, cui titulus est Emblemata," [a little book whose title is Emblemata] which at that time must have already been composed.⁸⁰ And even admitting that its contents were in part political or religious, it could certainly not represent an obstacle for a new dedication, since concealing what you mean is precisely a feature of the emblematic. On the other hand, Alciato would later take his emblems almost without modification and incorporate them in new revised and expanded editions regardless of the context in which they fell. If we assume that the collection completed at Christmas 1521 was merged in the *Emblemata liber* dedicated to Peutinger, we must also think that of the one hundred and four epigrams only a few were created after that date. Indeed, there are good reasons to suppose that most had already been made for Ambrogio Visconti.

We must consider then that Alciato, by his own admission, had occupied himself with studies of poetics mainly in Milan between 1514 and 1518, that is, during the period in Bologna [sic] when he was revising his ideas about the importance of the hieroglyphics on the literary and figurative arts. If the project to

⁷⁹ Mazzuchelli cit., p. 371, where he expresses himself thus regarding the epigrams which were preserved in manuscripts: "Five books of epigrams are in the Visconti library. The above-mentioned Nevizano attributes to the still young Alciato *Libros III Epigrammatum*". Even before Mazzuchelli the remarks of Nevizano are given by Argelati in his *Bibliotheca scriptorum Mediolanensium*, vol. I, part II, Milan, 745, p. 26, after having noted earlier that in the library of the Visconti there was even found an *Epigrammatum Lib. V adhuc ineditus inter quae duo ad Aurelium Albutium* and other dedications. Given the use of the word "are" by Mazzuchelli it must be assumed that he had found the first four books in the library in addition to the fifth book. Probably they must have been the *Collectanea* composed at the time for Calvi, while the fifth book must have been a collection of epigrams made up after April 1523.

⁸⁰ See above, p. 255.

edit an anthology of modern epigrams clearly derived from the circle of poets that revolved around Fasanini, the decision to surpass his rivals in the new field of hieroglyphic epigrams must have had the same origin. Conscious of the importance that emblematic poetry had for art, at that time he did not confine himself to revise his early poems, but dedicated himself to collecting material from the study of hieroglyphs for poetic purposes. The more extensive his knowledge in this area became, the greater must have been the impetus to compose emblems mainly because Alciato convinced himself that the best epigrams of the Aldine anthology were a model for his emblematic compositions because of the way they unlocked the secrets deliberately hidden in works of art. Of course, during his Milan period the best way to shed light on the rapid growth of the collection of emblems would be to examine how his hieroglyphic studies at the time had assumed that setting and that depth.

As a humanist, jurist and poet Alciato was sensitive to the charm of the mysterious hieroglyphs. Urged to interpret Roman law as an aspect of Roman culture, he was naturally inclined to learn more about hieroglyphs, because they seemed to be a singular exception to the rule of law. Taking advantage of this quiet period, Alciato could thus devote himself to the study of the Greek version of Horapollon, given that for him the remaining content of that Aldine edition⁸¹ was also a resource to mine for his poems. Another question is whether or not he actually researched and improved the difficult text of the *Hieroglyphica*. The direct borrowing from the translation of Fasanini suggests that in Milan he awaited with impatience the publication of the work because its contents had become one of the main interests of the Milanese humanists. Caelius Rhodiginus joined the group in 1515 and his *Antiquae Lectiones* dedicated to Grolier, so rich in information on hieroglyphs, had appeared in February 1516.⁸²

Rhodiginus was the academic pride of Milan; Giovio, his former student in Padua, had returned to assist in his lectures and amongst scholars⁸³ who liked to surround themselves with French patrons Rhodiginus was considered the highest authority to recite the verses of a contemporary.

⁸¹ See above, pp. 181 ff.

⁸² See above, pp. 199 ff.

⁸³ See P. Giovio, *Elogia virorum literis illustriurn*, Basileae 1577: "sed eum (Rhodiginum) tamen Patavii et Mediolani cum laude vel ob id, quod egregiam totius habitus dignitatem adhulisset, e suggestu docentem audivimus". However, he criticizes the style of the *Antiquae lectiones*. Giovio even published the poem of Calcagnini composed on the occasion of the death of Rhodiginus.

“Illic fulgenti residet Grolierius aula
et secum doctos continet ille viros
Caelius inter quos facundo prominet ore
et nitet ut leves gemma articulos”

[He resides at Groliers shining court
and among such scholars
Caelius is a leader in oratory
And shines like a bright jewel.

You can therefore understand why his *Lectiones* were the subject of the most lively discussions. Bandello, for example, would never forget the day he got to attend a dispute between Grolier and other humanists who were accustomed to gather in the convent of Santa Maria della Grazie where – recently completed – the resplendent *Cenacolo* of Leonardo was displayed.⁸⁴ Among the scholars who participated in these meetings we can suppose that there was also the young Alciato.

On the other hand there is no doubt that hieroglyphics had ample space in academic discussions. Grolier, as a coin collector, was eager for detailed information on Horapollo, whose work seemed so promising for the clarification of ancient numismatic symbols. It is also likely that on such occasions Alciato entertained the Milanese humanists by reciting the epigrams from the *Hieroglyphica*.

Since it was favored by Coelius, there was then in Milan a widespread demand for a translation of Horapollo, although the work done by Fasanini represented for Alciato a particular occasion to cultivate emblematic poetry. In the “*Declaratio sacrarum literarum ex diversis auctoribus*” [Declaration of sacred literature from different authors] there were printed the theories that Fasanini had publicized orally in Bologna. The thread of research of Alciato was not therefore limited to such occasions since he sought always to return to the sources just as in 1517 he dedicated a commentary on Tacitus to Galeazzo Visconti.⁸⁵ The classic and modern authors, by whom

⁸⁴ Le Roux de Lincy cit., p. 44, where the remarks with respect to Bandello are reported; on p. 445 there is the poem from which is taken the above quotation about Rhodiginus. The work was printed in Milan in 1518.

⁸⁵ Galeazzo Visconti, to whom the letter of Alciato of December 10, 1520 refers is certainly the same one who was ambassador of Ludovico il Moro. In his *Historia belli Suitensis* Pirkheimer writes about Galeazzo, “mecum perrexit legatus Mediol. Galeatius Vicecomes, cum quo mihi prius” - thus by the time he was studying at the University of Pavia – “amicitia intercesserat”.

Fasanini had been inspired, thus formed the basis of the hieroglyphic knowledge of Alciato, providing material “ex rebus naturalibus” [from natural things] for his emblematic epigrams. The author preferred humanistic compilations related to antiquity, so that among the sources used, beyond the *Adagia* of Erasmus, there was especially the *Antiquae lectiones* of Rhodiginus, because in a certain sense the work of Erasmus complimented the hieroglyphic collection of Colonna, while the *Antiquae lectiones* represented a useful comment on the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollo.

It is strange that Coelius who, although he devoted a commentary in the *Lectiones* to his friend Calcagnini, translator of the *De Iside et Osiride*, had not used in his chapter on “hieroglyphica grammata” [hieroglyphic writing], Plutarch’s observations on the topic to which the latter also devotes a chapter. Coelius knew the treatise and was probably the first to call attention to the veiled image of Sais, turning into Latin the extract from the Greek author which was so celebrated at the time.⁸⁶ This gap in the chapter just mentioned is, therefore, even more striking, and it is natural to assume that in the course of discussions the young Coelius had taken a critical attitude. Studies related to the contemporary epigram in fact led him to study this text of the *Moralia*.

In order to comment on contemporary poets, Alciato could not neglect to examine also the compositions of Poliziano and Crinito, and it was particularly from the first of these poets, whom he deeply admired, that he developed the acute judgement with which he was accustomed to judge more recent authors. He would also carefully read the prose works of these authors. For the emblem entitled “In momentaneam foelicitatem,” he in fact used the comparison between the pine-cone and the pumpkin that Francesco Barbaro, taking it in turn from the *Honesta Disciplina* of Crinito, had once applied to Venice and Milan,^{87,xxxix}

xxxix The Augsburg editions do not have folio numbers and the emblem on Transience “In momentaneam felicitatem” is Emblem 125 in later editions of the *Emblemata*.

⁸⁶ See Caelius Rhodiginus, *Antiquarum lectionum commentarii*, Venetia, 1516, fol. 126: “In Sai Pallados erat templum, quam Isin etiam arbitrantur, ejusmodi praescriptione. Ego sum, quod fuit, est, erit. Meum peplum mortalis revelavit nemo”. He had previously spoken of the Sphinx: “scitu vero dignum illud ista, Aegyptiorum templa sphingem astitui solitam, quo argumento indicarent, theologiam ipsorum sapientiam obscuriorem fabulisque ita saepe convelatam, ut veritatis vestigia vix interlucere”. Once (fol. 339) in passing, Rhodiginus speaks even of the meaning of the word “emblemata” in the edition of Augsburg (p. 85).

⁸⁷ See Crinito cit., bk. II, ch. XIII. According to Guicciardini, Alciato would use the emblem of the pumpkin as a symbol of transience found on the door of an Englishman who had made himself obnoxious because of his success; so also Mignault cit., p. CXXIII. The emblem is on fol. 85 of the Augsburg edition of the *Emblemata*.

while the essay on Harpocrates in the *Miscellanea* of Poliziano led him to compose emblematic verses on the art of silence.⁸⁸ Both Poliziano and Crinito had devoted special attention to the treatise of Plutarch and it was particularly in the description of the Egyptian deity that Alciato explicitly referred to information provided by this Greek author. Andrea, who had many interests, was thus driven by his precocious desire for knowledge to gather information on the secrets of Egyptian mythology.

At this point we must remember what we said earlier about the importance for humanists that Plutarch's writings had had for the study of hieroglyphics, since from this one can easily deduce what effect it also had on Alciato as the founder of emblematic poetry.⁸⁹ The admiring wonder of Plutarch in front of the arcane art of the Egyptians, who could conceal their wisdom in symbols, was transmitted to our inspired author with all the dogmatic weight of information which came from a classical source. It was still a long way from the belief that the Greek author was driven by a desire to infuse new life into ancient Greek religion through oriental ideas. Without any doubt therefore Alciato welcomed the Greek interpretation of the hieroglyph because it reinforced in him his ambition to develop symbolic poetry.

In this regard he made much of the affirmation of Plutarch that the Pythagorean *symbola* were not very distinct from the hieroglyphs. All that the young lawyer had heard in Bologna about the essence of those poetic maxims, everything he had read about such things in the brief text of Beroaldo or learned in the new examples contained in the *Adagia* of Erasmus, ended by assuming an Egyptian and mystical coloring. Thus he did not merely repeat what Beroaldo had written on the symbol "supra chenicem non sedendum" [do not sit on a choenica] to render the words "desidiam abjiciendam"⁹⁰ [idleness should be

⁸⁸ On the essay of Poliziano, see above p. 150; the emblem "in silentium" is on fol. A3.

⁸⁹ See above pp. 152 ff.

⁹⁰ See Alciato cit., fol. 87 "Quisquis iners abeat in chenice figere sedem/ Nos prohibent Samii dogmata sancta senis./ Surge igitur duroque manus asuesce labori,/ Det tibi dimensos crastina ut hora cibos". Beroaldo (see above, p. 243) interprets "supra chenicem non sedendum" as "de crastina esse cogitandum". The illustration in the Steyner edition shows a man climbing the steps of a mountain with the help of a winged woman to reach a similar woman sitting on top of the mountain. In this way it captures the intention more clearly than the illustration of the verses of other publishers which instead depict a man sitting pensively on a measure of wheat. Mercati cit., p. 220: [Italian] "As some of the moderns have stated, there is depicted a man seated on a measure of wheat although the idea indicates the opposite".

^{x1} The interpretation of this symbol is confirmed by Plutarch who adds, as does Diogenes Laertius, that the real moral is that we should have forethought in providing for our daily bread which is an appropriate reference to the measure of grain on which they are seated (*modius* or *χοίτικα*). Perhaps to emphasize his point Alciato uses the same motif in two consecutive Emblems. The previous emblem no. 80 is also headed *Desidea* with the epigram reading: "Essaeus relaxes on a bushel, observing the stars/ and he covers a lighted torch beneath it./ Laziness, even with the appearance of virtue, covered with a hood,/ is of no use to itself nor anyone else". But this emblem must do more than castigate laziness since even a lazy man would be reluctant to put a flaming torch beneath a measure of hay on which he was sitting. In fact the emblem conflates or confuses the injunction against laziness with a reference to Matthew 5.15 which says in the Authorized Version: "neither do men light a candle and put in under a bushel (*modius* in the Vulgate) but on a candlestick; and it gives light to all that are in the house".

avoided] in hieroglyphic-symbolic form but even adapted it to conceal the real meaning of the symbols.^{x1} {As mentioned above, Beroaldo had interpreted the sayings of Pythagoras through the formula "*aliud sonantia, aliud significantia*" [sounding like one thing, but signifying something else]. This explains why very often the titles of the emblems do not relate directly to the hieroglyphs faithfully described in the text, which make sense but must be inferred from the meaning of the latter. The "*tacitae notae*" [silent signs] of Alciato could therefore conceal the thoughts behind this dual coding which then also added references to particular events}.⁹¹

Of no less importance for emblematics were the relationships that, according to Plutarch, had existed between Greek and Egyptian symbolism. Previously we have remarked on passages in Plutarch's work in which different hieroglyphs are explicitly juxtaposed next to images of magistrates without hands or with closed eyes images that originally were in Thebes, and which symbolized the concept of incorruptibility. The idea that in the images of Egyptian divinity some mystery could be assumed was later taken up by Plutarch to explain the unusual characteristics of several famous Greek statues,⁹² among which he emphasizes particularly that one where Phidias had placed a dragon by the side of Minerva and that where, a tortoise was placed on the Venus Elica, explaining this by the fact that the young girls have a need for protection, while married women are suited for the role of discreet housewives. Could there have been for Alciato any better demonstration of the accuracy of an opinion already expressed at the time by Alberti that there was an equivalence between Egyptian hieroglyphs and other symbols of antiquity? In this way, the examples cited by Plutarch served as themes for as many epigrams. Thus, from portrayals

⁹¹ The text in brackets {} is deleted in the author's original manuscript (editor's note).

⁹² See the translation of Calcagnini cited. "Neque vero mirandum est, quod Aegyptii et Graeci hasce adeo leves ac tenues similitudines amaverint. Nam et alii multis huiusmodi turn inscriptis turn efformatis deorum imaginibus usi sunt. Quale apud Cretas Jovis simulachrum auribus carens, dominatorem enim et principem omnium neminem decet audire. Minercae autem simulachro Phidias draconem adjunxit, Veneri autem, quae in Elide colitur, testudinem, quod virgines custodiae indigeant, viro autem conjunctas et domestica gubernatio et silentium imprimis deceat. Neptuni autem tridens tertiae regionis symbolum est, quam mare occupat, utpote post coelum atque aerem coordinatae". See the verses of Alciato, cit., fol. C2 and F1^r. With regard to the equivalence of Greek symbols and hieroglyphics see particularly for the later period Mercati, cit., p. 129: "yet afterwards the Greeks used this kind of Hieroglyph".



Fig. 33 Woodcut by Joerg Breu from the *Emblemata of Alciato* (Augsburg 1531) – *In eum qui truculentia suorum*

of judges derived the emblem “in senatum boni principis” [in the senate of the good prince] while from the works of Phidias came the hieroglyphic expression of the motto “custodiendas virgines” [on the guarding of virgins] and “mulieris famam non formam vulgatam esse oportere” [the reputation of a woman and not her beauty should be extolled]. The admiration of the



Fig. 34. Woodcut by Joerg Breu from the *Emblemata of Alciato* (Augsburg 1531) – *Paupertatem summis*

Milanese humanist for this “muta poesis” [silent poetry] of the ancients, in the definition of Poliziano, was no less than that expressed so eloquently by Valeriano at the same time.⁹³ The difference is that Andrea, less favored in his place of residence but relying on literary sources, was able to turn to account the emblematic mode for “arcana pingendi caelandique ratio” [the secret meaning of painting and engraving].

From this point of view, the Greek Anthology which we have already spoken of, printed for the first time in Florence in 1494 from a manuscript of Johannes Lascaris and in 1503 expanded by Aldus, constituted an extremely rich source for Alciato.⁹⁴ The young Andrea had previously adopted it as a model for his own poems although during the Milan period, enriched by the experience of reading Plutarch and Horapollo, he began to appreciate its content for the purposes of emblematic poetry. The numerous epigrams in which the Greek poets had expressed their thoughts on the most famous descriptions of the ancient world, of the circle of heroes, poets, thinkers and other famous people of antiquity, quite apart from funerary inscriptions and the celebratory texts of this poetic collection, to which the allegorical Renaissance sensibility never tired of paying homage, awakened in Alciato the ideas that Rinieri had already expressed, according to which the ancient poets had reserved within their compositions the widest space for concepts which were then expressed in a concentrated way in hieroglyphs.⁹⁵

Alciato then examined individual extracts from the Anthology, looking to depict the images in verse and immediately incorporating them as emblems whenever it was possible to summarize the moral that they expressed with some conciseness both in the text and the separate figured signs. Alciato came thus to assume such intimacy with the contents of epigrams so



Fig. 35. Woodcut by Joerg Breu from the *Emblemata* of Alciato (Augsburg 1531 – *In victoriam dolo partem*)

⁹³ See above p. 164 nt. 39 and p. 196 nt. 37.

⁹⁴ See Didot, cit., p. 251 ff.

⁹⁵ See above p. 196.

as to believe that everyone else could do the same, that it was possible to render thoughts in images and that only those who had read the verse compositions would understand those thoughts. No one could have recognized the words “in victoriam dolo partam” in the image of a woman who was tearing her hair next to a coffin (see fig. 35) if it had not been accompanied for clarification by a tetradistich of Asclepiades, translated by Alciato:

Aiacis tumulum ego perluo virtus,
Heu misera albentes dilacerata comas,
Scilicet hoc restabat adhuc, ut iudice graeco
Vinceret et causa stet potiore dolus.⁹⁶

[Virtue, bedew with tears the tomb of Ajax,
tearing, alas, in my grief my whitening hairs.
This was all it needed – that I should be worsted with
a Greek as judge,
and that guile should appear to have the better cause.
Emblem 48]^{xli}

And who could have understood that the shield held by a soldier of fortune (see fig. 36) meant “auxilium nunquam deficiens” [never despair of help] if he had not been assisted by the epigram which incorporates the verses of Leonidas on the heroic action of Miotilo:

Bina pericla unis effugi sedulus armis,
Cum premererque solo, cum premererque salo.
Incolumem ex acie clypeus me praestitit idem
Naufragum apprensus littoral adusque tulit.⁹⁷

[Double danger have I escaped by careful use of one
set of arms,
when I was hard-pressed on dry land and when I was
in dire straits amidst the swelling billows.
My shield brought me safe from the battle.
The same shield, when I seized it, carried me, ship-
wrecked, right to the shore. Emblem 162]

{Without the mottos with these images they remain in fact insoluble puzzles for otherwise they seem to be explanations which could no longer be the “tacite notae” [silent marks] that

^{xli} This and the remaining translations of the Alciato epigrams are taken from the Glasgow Alciato website:

<http://www.emblems.arts.gla.ac.uk/alciato/> (6/27/2012). Some authorities attribute the epigram to Mnascalas, a close contemporary of Asclepiades.

⁹⁶ See Alciato cit., fol. A5^v and Greek text in Thuilius cit., p. 234. The poem is in the third book in the Aldine anthology under the heading epigrams, εἰς ἑποας.

⁹⁷ See Alciato cit., fol. C2v.

Alciato intended. However, when you add to the *compositio* just a single name, then the emblematic poet violates the fundamental principle of humanistic research into hieroglyphs, according to which the interpretation of each sign must be clearly explicable to the observer on the basis of “natural speech”. Later Mercati also would make the same comment believing, like Alciato, that the *Emblemata* was a particular kind of hieroglyphics. As a result he criticized any image that depicted a phrase or a saying the interpretation of which could not be achieved “without the knowledge of these stories by a wise and prudent man.”⁹⁸⁹⁹

By a strange coincidence, Alciato had seen his idea for this literary novelty confirmed earlier. Previously Rhodiginus had occasionally used the work of Pausanias about his journeys through Greece in the *Antiquae lectiones* and in a November 1515 dedication, Marcus Musurus^{xlii} had drawn the attention of Grolier to the publication of that text which had been left unfinished due to the death of Aldus. Finally, in July the following year the *editio princeps* appeared.¹⁰⁰ Alciato must thus have got a description of the great number of works which Pausanias had encountered during his journeys despite the looting undertaken by the Romans. At the same time, he could get an idea of the myths, legends and stories that the Greek author had recounted among which there were also those to which the epigrams referred and which were described by Plutarch. This was the case for the Venus Elica; Pausanias left it up to the recognized experts to comment on the significance of the tortoise.¹⁰¹ Thus Alciato must have had great satisfaction in remembering the passage first recounted in the *De Iside et Osiride*.

If all this confirmed his opinion about hieroglyphic art, the description of the painting by Polygnotus^{xliii} at Delphi suggested rather new historical or mythical themes which might be the basis for his emblems. In particular, he was interested in the description of a man in the mural that alluded to the visit to hell made by Ulysses. Polygnotus had portrayed him in a sitting position, attempting to weave a rope of rushes, which was im-

^{xlii} Marcus Musurus (1470-1517), a professor of Greek at the University of Padua, was a friend of Aldus and one of the dedicatees of Erasmus' *Adagia* (see p. 177 above).

^{xliii} Polygnotus flourished in the middle of the fifth century BCE and would thus have been a contemporary of Phidias.

⁹⁸ See Mercati cit, p. 118; Thuilius cit., pp. 683 ff, and Green cit., p. 34, where the Greek text is also given.

⁹⁹ The text in parentheses {} was struck out by the author (editor's note).

¹⁰⁰ See Firmin Didot cit, pp. 407 and 464. A Latin translation was published by Romulo Amasea only in 1547.

¹⁰¹ See Amasea's translation in the edition of Πανσανίου τῆς Ἑλλάδος περιήγησις, vol. II, Francofurti 1588, p. 173: “quae . . . testudinis . . . ratio sit, quibus haec persecutari curae est quaerendum relinquo”.

mediately eaten by a donkey at his side. The figure, together with the name Oknos, was considered the portrait of a hard-working husband accompanied by a prodigal spouse, while Pausanias was rather inclined to see the symbolic image of "fruitless effort" according to the saying, "weaving the rope of Oknos".¹⁰² Andrea brought a variant to the prime meaning of this "profound symbol" entitling his verse "De his, qui meretricibus donant, quod in bonos usus vertici debeat" [On those who give to whores that which should be turned to good use].

Probably he had been induced to do so from a sculpture which was then in Rome and on which you could read the inscription, "O nefas parentis. [O the wickedness of family]."¹⁰³ At any rate, it is certain that, thanks to his Roman friends, Alciato must have been informed about the antiquities that were found in the Eternal City. Also the pictures taken as a model for a "fidei symbolum" [symbol of faith] dated back to an ancient relief, in which "honor" [honor] and "veritas" [truth] were depicted in the act of shaking hands in front of "amor" [love] in the center. Mazocchi had inserted a similar image in his work on such inscriptions printed in 1521, where the allegory appears with the image of busts accompanied by captions, even if "Truth" is dressed and is not, as Alciato describes it, naked.¹⁰⁴ This difference probably comes from the wish to make it immediately recognizable as such, just as the other two figures are characterized by a crown of roses and a purple dress.¹⁰⁵ When turning to Crinito, Alciato

¹⁰² See Pausanias, X, 25-31: "eam rem credunt per ambages voluisse Polygnotum significare. Satis scio Ionum verbum esse, quoties hominem viderint ad laborem quidem vehementer propensum, sed cui nulli emolumento labor sit. Vir iste, inquiunt, Oeni funiculum torquet". This passage was of especial interest to Goethe; see *Polygnot's Gemälde* (Hempel'sche Ausgabe, pt. 28, p. 263 ff.).

¹⁰³ A copy was published in *Inscriptiones sacrosanctae vetustatis* (fol. CCIX) edited in Ingolstadt by Petrus Apianus and Bartholomaeus Amantius. The original was preserved in Rome "in claustro d. Simpliciana Columnacii". Mazocchi does not record this in his *Epigrammata* (see above, ch. 4 nt. 32). Nevertheless, some information and illustrations representing the original came into the hands of German scholars, from whose collections Apianus obtained the entries. Among those he mentions in particular those of Peutingering and Pirkheimer. Perhaps Mazocchi missed this sculpture.

¹⁰⁴ See Mazocchi cit., fol. CXXII^r and also Thuilius, p. 57.

¹⁰⁵ See Alciato cit., fol. E7: "Stet depictus honor tyrio velatus amictu,/ Ejusque jungat nuda dextram veritas./ Sitque amor in medio castus, cui tempora circum/ Rosa it, Dyones pulchrior cupidine./ Constituunt haec signa fidem, reverential honoris/ Quam fovet, alit amor parturitque veritas". However, the artist had depicted "Honor" in the guise of a woman, so that the woodcut has a composition of characters identical to the *Amor sacro e profano* by Titian. If we consider the transformations undergone by the illustration of Mazocchi

calls the “historia” a second source for his emblems, he understood this term in its broadest sense already given by Alberti, that is, as an allegorical-mythological representation, with connections to the works of Poliziano, Crinito, Plutarch and Pausanias and not the least to the Greek epigrams.

If we look at the stages of the hieroglyphic studies made in Milan by the young Alciato one realizes that his activities in the field of poetry, linked to his research into hieroglyphics, are characterized by a very copious production of emblematic poems. Most epigrams of the edition of Steyner’s anthology, at least those that are not derived from emblematic composition of a previous era, were in fact composed at that time, although the number of emblems translated directly from the Greek is certainly not negligible.

If the *Emblemata* composed at the time of the request of Ambrogio Visconti therefore formed a substantial part of the collection dedicated to Peutinger, it is hard to find them as a whole in the work so as to be able to ascertain their number. Alciato in fact composed his emblematic poems inspired always by the same principles and using the same sources. This makes it difficult to detect differences between the epigrams composed before and after 1521, if they do not disclose, as in the cases to which we have referred, some new literary impressions derived from hieroglyphics. Only when they reflect contemporary historical events, personal experiences or feelings and opinions relating to a specific phase of his life, is it possible to have some reference to date them. For this reason we will try to sort chronologically according to this criterion those poems that we can quote from the *Emblemata* to illustrate the path that had led Alciato from the acquisition of hieroglyphs to the free creation of emblems.

☛ *The utilization of the hieroglyphs collected for Ambrogio Visconti in the Emblemata of Alciato*

Turning the motto of his teacher Giasone into hieroglyphs, the young Andrea intended actually to address the problem, to which, however, no humanist remained indifferent, of whether the symbol of the coin of Titus, an anchor around which is wrapped a dolphin, was really the representation of Augustus’s famous motto “*festina lente*” [hasten slowly].^{xliv} As already men-

^{xliv} Giehlow contradicts himself here. Giasone’s motto, which was also Alciato’s own motto in his device of the caduceus and the cornucopia, is *Virtuti fortuna comes*. The dolphin and the anchor and the motto *festina lente* was Aldus’ printers mark and is depicted on his medallion.

to those of the poet and the artist, the famous painting must have been a description modified by the poem of a classical sculpture or from a sculpture directly interpreted by the painter. With regard to the meaning of the symbols in the background of the painting see above, p. 224.

tioned, in this respect Alciato had made his own the opinion that Colonna had expressed when in the *Hypnerotomachia* he had used separately and in a different context, the anchor and the dolphin as hieroglyphs which symbolized respectively as “firma” [steady] and “incolumitas” [safety]. Alciato attributed to the two signs the same meaning even when they were interconnected, obtaining the saying “princeps subditorum incolumitatem procurans” [the prince caring for the safety of his subjects]. From the explanatory verses it clearly appears that the anchor, the symbol of firmness, had become for the poet the symbol of the prince, for whom such a quality was essential, so his bold opposition to the dominant opinion during the discussions provoked by the visit of Aldus, and the fact of playing a game against Erasmus with his own weapons, the mysterious hieroglyphs of Chaeremon-Colonna, reflected in full the pugnacious, protesting, and confident character of the young lawyer.

As a symbol of Egyptian origin, the dolphin was a key element in the emblematics of Alciato, but one taking on very different meanings. As an animal that had rescued Arion from the greed of the sailors, it became the emblem “in avaros vel, quibus melior conditio ab extraneis offertur” [On the avaricious; or being treated better by strangers]. Andrea was driven to accept this interpretation from an epigram of Bianor, *ἐἰς εἰκόνα Ἀρίονος τοῦ κιθαρωδοῦ*, [on the image of the lyre of Arion]^{xlv} which he follows almost verbatim in his explanatory verses. He intended by this to describe his situation in Milan, after he decided to take advantage of better conditions and moved to Avignon. In the belief that he had been left by himself, Alciato compared himself to the dolphin cast ashore by the waves, symbolizing the one “qui truculentia suorum perierit” [On one who perished through the savagery of his own people: Emblem 162] (see fig. 33). In fact, in recent years Alciato was in difficulties because, as he complained in a letter addressed to Calvi shortly after his arrival at Avignon, in addition to having lost most of his assets, he was even forced to abandon his wife. From this point on it was the law that acted for him as protection, as shelter from the stormy situation in his own country.

The difficulties over the contemporary interpretation of the coin of Titus meant that our author began to think about how you could adequately render in hieroglyphics the imperial motto “festina lente”. It was thus that a suggestion of Erasmus was met with favorably. The latter had described the parasitical fish called by the Greeks *ἐχέγινις* and the Romans “remora” [obstacle]^{xlvi}

^{xlv} Giehlow must have made use of his memory here since the actual epigram has different wording: *ἔστησεν Περιανδρος Ἀρίονος εἰκόνα ταύτην, / καὶ τὸν ἀπολλυμένῳ σύνδρομα νηζόμενον / εἰνάλιον δελφίνα. λέγει δ' ἐπ' Ἀρίονι μῦθος: / κτεινόμεθ' ἀνθρώποις, ἰχθύσι σωζόμεθα*. See W. R. Paton, *Greek Anthology*, 5.276, vol. 5, p. 326.

^{xlvi} The remora is the sucker fish which attaches itself to larger fish and even to small boats and was believed in classical times to be able to stop ships entirely.

^{xlvii} Erasmus (*Adagia* 2,1,14) means here that a depiction of the remora is not wholly satisfactory since the fish has no characteristic marks and therefore in such a depiction cannot be distinguished from any other fish.

^{xlviii} Erasmus (*Adagia* 2,1,6) also makes clear that *matura* or *maturare* in classical Latin has a meaning different from the modern word "mature". It means to do something at exactly the right moment and, in the context, to be ready when that moment comes.

which gives the concept "tarditas cunctatioque" [delay]. The reluctance of Erasmus,^{xlvii} according to whom the adoption of the picture of the "echeneis" was to be discouraged due to the lack of any distinguishing marks, was ignored by Alciato because he believed that the image was very appropriate. As a result the symbol of slowness, joined with the arrow, that is speed, came to reflect the Augustan motto which in abbreviated form was rendered as "matura."^{xlviii} Here Alciato provides a typical example of the great interest that, even early in the sixteenth century, the Renaissance continued to elicit for this well-known imperial motto. It is therefore not surprising that in the same period his hieroglyphs had spread beyond the Alps, or that this motto with its two contrasting concepts came to result in new symbolic inventions. In Italy the emblems of Alciato were followed by a series of new inventions. Domenichi thought for example that the

^{xlix} The origin of many of these symbols is discussed by Edgar Wind in *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance*. Norton, 1966, p. 98, nt. 4. Wind explains how this obsession with contrasts derives from the philosophical talking point of the "coincidence of opposites", opposites which can only be resolved in the oneness of God

¹ See p. 277. "Cataglyphia sculptura di hieroglyphi"; the phrase comes from the *Hypnerotomachia* fol. b7. It is also used by Rabelais, *Pantagruel*, bk. V, 41 where it is clearly a parody of the *Hypnerotomachia*. It is noticeable that Colonna uses the image of a woman while Alciato in all editions has the image of a man (in a few cases a putto) which supports Giehlow's theory that this emblem is autobiographical.



Fig. 36 Woodcut by Joerg Breu from the *Emblemata* of Alciato (Augsburg 1531 – *Auxilium nunquam*)

combination of a butterfly and a crab, found on ancient coins, alluded to the sense of this motto. Paul III depicted it juxtaposing a dolphin and rhinoceros, while Duke Cosimo represented it with a tortoise who hoisted a sail.^{xlix} It is striking that the choice of the symbol was influenced by the hieroglyphic representation of Colonna, the same one that Alciato had already used in very unique way.

This was the "hieroglyphs sculpted in relief" described above¹ (see fig. 36) representing a woman partly seated and partly about to rise, with a pair of wings in one hand and a turtle in the other. The contradictions expressed by the image, on the one hand the "process of lifting" attached to the turtle, the sym-

bol of slowness, on the other the “sitting” coupled with the pair of wings, a symbol of speed, as well as the contrast between the same hieroglyphs, formed the “*velocitatem sedendo, tarditatem tempera surge*.” Alciato and Cosimo had both used the details of this hieroglyphic creation so rich in internal references. But while Cosimo had remained faithful to the overall meaning, understood as a paraphrase of the imperial motto and had used the turtle to express it visually, Alciato had instead given to the hieroglyph a different sense that clearly reflected his own situation. The emblem “*paupertatem summis ingeniis obesse, ne provehantur*” [Poverty prevents the advancement of the best of abilities: Emblem 121]. (see fig. 34) that was composed by Alciato, he described and interpreted in this way:

Dextra tenet lapidem, manus altera sustinet alas,
 Ut me pluma levat, sic grave mergit onus.
 Ingenio poteram superas volitare per arces,
 Me nisi paupertas invidia deprimeret.

[My right hand holds a rock, the other bears wings.
 As the feathers lift me, so the heavy weight drags me down.
 By my mental gifts I could have flown through the heights
 of heaven,
 If malign poverty did not hold me back.]

With the term “*sustinet alas*” [bears wings] Andrea thus concluded by following Colonna almost to the letter. The latter had described a hand, “which held a pair of wings” and he had also kept the contrast between “sitting” and “rising up” and between “lifting” and “falling” with which he intended to illustrate the concept of movement whose power was restrained. The meaning, however, was interpreted in different ways: Colonna and Cosimo read in it the representation of the advisability of moderation in the classic proverb, while Alciato tried to symbolize the effects of poverty on a mind of genius and ambition. For this reason he had replaced the image of the turtle with that of a stone. So he must certainly have conceived these lines when he experienced temporary difficulties at home which were hampering his life.

Just as he had availed himself of the hieroglyphics of Colonna, Alciato worked with the hieroglyphics of Horapollon. If we exclude the added poems, the emblems previously reported are nothing other than sections or parts of the *Hieroglyphica* put in verse which are taken word for word from the translation of Fasanini. The poet had allowed himself only a little difference in the use of the hieroglyph of the stork which he had interpreted

on the basis of a note of the Bolognese translator. A similar process can be found in the case of the emblem of the “dives indoctus,” [the stupid rich man: Emblem 190] whose accompanying verses are as follows:

Tranat aquas residens precioso in veliere Phrixus
Et flavam impavidus per mare scandit ovem.
Ecquid id est? Vir sensu hebeti, sed divite gaza,
Conjugis aut servi quem regit arbitrium.

[Phrixus traverses the waters astride the precious fleece
and fearlessly rides the golden sheep across the sea.
– Whatever can this be? – A man dull of sense, but
with rich coffers,
whom the whim of wife or servant rules.]

The symbol of the ram quoted in *Hieroglyphica*, bk. II, ch. LXXIV,^{li} as a sign of “insipientia” [foolishness], is combined with a note of Fasanini referring to bk. I, chap. XXXVIII, “quomodo aegypti literas” [how they depict the script of the Egyptians] which states that the rich should pursue science, “ne oves aurei velleris sint.” [(since) sheep are not the golden fleece]. Evidently Alciato had written the lines after he had been offended; perhaps he was alluding to someone who had refused him support, perhaps even a Milanese member of the Order of the Golden Fleece and a follower of the Sforza. The hieroglyphs in fact lend themselves very well to these cryptic jabs.

But Alciato even took into account the different meanings attributed to this same sign by Horapollon. So for example, to represent the words “ex literarum studiis immortalitatem acquiri” [Immortality won through literary pursuits: Emblem 133] he used a triton placed at the center of a circle formed from a snake biting its tail. In this case, the sea goddess evidently took the place of the royal name that the Egyptians were accustomed to inscribe in this circle, “tali pictura videlicet orbiculi innuente regem ipsum universo orbi dominari.” [such pictures that is of circles imply the king himself ruling the orb of the world]. The latter consideration goes back to the final verse of the emblem [133 as above] “fama viros animo insignes/ praeclearaque gesta prosequitur toto mandat et orbi legi,” [Fame follows men of outstanding intellect and their noble achievements, and bids them be read throughout all the world] where the reference is to the Triton, a symbol of glory, while the remaining text that illustrates the hieroglyph, that appears contradictory due to some error, is set aside. By the term “immortalitas” [im-

^{li} This hieroglyph of “fearfulness” does not refer to a ram but the wolf and the stone. The elephant and the ram are the symbols in Horapollon II.85.

mortality] adopted as the title, it furthermore appears obvious that the circle formed by the snake must also have been incorporated separately as a hieroglyph representing eternity. Finally, if we take into account how the snake itself represents the wisdom derived from these studies, you get an idea, more instructive than playful, of the subtlety implicit in the reasoning of the author, a humanist who deserves also the title of sacred scribe. Alciato constructed this composition when he was still young. In fact, in his annotations to Tacitus, published in 1517,^{lii} the meaning of the Triton, derived from Macrobius, was already being interpreted differently. Furthermore it well suited the character of the young humanist that he intended to entrust his own fame to the immortality of hieroglyphics.

The varied interpretation of the image of the snake, especially by Horapollon who had himself provided the attribute of divinity, as well as the symbol of universal power, had led Alciato to see a hieroglyph in the snake, that is the *biscia* [grass-snake], an animal that appears in the arms of Milan (which is a snake from whose mouth issues an infant holding out her arms); to be precise: the emblem that Alexander the Great might have adopted to emphasize his descent from Jupiter. The proof of this hypothesis was based on some coins which Andrea claimed to have personally examined, and yet these may be felt to have been counterfeit if it is not credible that a snake could be a decorative element above the helmet. Perhaps even this sign had been enough for the poet to interpret the snake as a symbol of Jupiter, which could not have eaten the child, but would rather have brought him into the world, just as Pallas was born from his head. The overall significance was nothing but a refined tribute to the descendants of that Ottone Visconti who first adopted this standard, previously used by a Saracen whom he had defeated in battle, a Saracen who had claimed to be a descendant of Alexander. Alciato only dedicated this humanistic tribute to Duke Maximilian Sforza in 1548^{liii} (the Duke had died in 1530), on the occasion of a revision of the *Emblemata*. In this way, he intended to recall the man in whose honor he had originally composed the verses written before the deposition of the Sforza (in October of 1515). The reason for such a late dedication can be assumed to be from the connection between the Duke and the crown of France and his brother Francesco Maria.

If this epigram demonstrates that Alciato was also led to believe that these were a form of his “silent signs” thanks to a he-

^{lii} This edition printed in Milan by Minutiana is a reprint of the 1515 *editio princeps* edited by Beroaldo with Aldus' notes from a manuscript now in the Laurentiana (Med. 68.1). It was the subject of a famous dispute over copyright; for further discussion, see

<http://www.historyofinformation.com/expanded.php?id=2883> (6/29/2012).

^{liii} See above ch. 7 nt. xx – the dedication to Maximilian in the motto for Emblem 1 in the *Emblemata* is contained in the 1534 Paris edition onwards. The epigram to the emblem explains the legend of the birth of the child akin to the birth of Athena. Nevertheless the arms shown in the picture are the Visconti arms not the Sforza arms.

raldic representation of a sign known as a hieroglyph, what follows shows the same process he followed even in the literary field. Think of the beaver as an image that symbolizes the words “aere quandoque salutem redimendam” [Sometimes money must be spent to purchase safety: Emblem 153] since from its natural characteristics is derived the following:¹⁰⁶

Et pedibus segnis, tumida et propendulus alvo
Hic tamen insidias effugit arte fiber:
Mordicus ipse sibi medicata virilia vellit
atque abjicit sese gnarus ob illa peti.

[Though slow of foot and with swollen belly hanging down,
the beaver nonetheless escapes the ambush by this trick:
it tears off with its teeth its testicles, which are full of a medicinal substance,
and throws them aside, knowing that it is hunted for their sake.]

The starting point is again a chapter of the *Hieroglyphica* which deals with animal characteristics, and whose reading must have been particularly interesting either in the Aldine edition or the translation of Fasanini. The latter had indeed enriched the short text of the Horapollo with a description from the *Satires* of Juvenal, which Alciato had already studied together with Parrasio.^{liv} Aldus meanwhile, along with the text version of the *Hieroglyphica* in Greek and Latin, had also commented on Aesop's fables, one of which gives the same characteristics of the beaver. The comparison of these authors, to which was added the essential text of Pliny, therefore occurred spontaneously. The emblem merely originated from these comparisons: Pliny, Juvenal and Fasanini helped provide details of the history of this animal, while the moral was taken from the fable of Aesop, who unlike Horapollo, had affirmed: “Homines prudentes pro sua salute nullum agere respectum pecuni.” [For his own good the prudent man does not talk about money]. However, that the beaver was considered a “tacita nota” [silent sign] is due to the relevant chapter of the *Hieroglyphica*. It is symptomatic that the humanist Alciato had avoided any of the moralizing interpretations of the beaver given by the Physiologus and by the animal books. Although they were works which could not have been unknown to him and although Alciato had direct recourse to the classics, he ended up choosing the interpretation that best corresponded to his personal situation. In fact Alciato must have composed the epigram in the

^{liv} The only contribution by Fasanini was the addition in his note of the word “eunuch” taken from Juvenal's twelfth Satire.

¹⁰⁶ Next to this point the manuscript contains the following marginal note: “Jovius! p. 97.”

years he had lost most of his assets other than his library.

Referring to the fable the naturalist observations of which are consistent with the exegesis of Horapollo for the symbolic figure of the beaver, Alciato composed a number of other emblems which had only the depiction of animals in common with the *Hieroglyphica*, since they are entirely autonomous both in the description and in the interpretation. It is very probable that in these cases the Greek fables continued to be the genre from which they were derived. The similarities between them and some chapters of the second book of *Hieroglyphica* cannot be dismissed. In the latter there are animals that usually acted in pairs and whose behavior could exhibit some moral examples. Moreover, Aldus had deliberately printed in the same volume both the *Hieroglyphica* and the fables of Aesop and Gabria [Babrius], a choice that Alciato must certainly have approved.

Reading the first of Aesop's fables, the one that tells the story of the eagle and the beetle,^{lv} Andrea definitely had to think about the important role that these animals had in the text of Horapollo. Crucial to their adoption as emblems was probably the desire to provide a parallel for the obscure combination of a beetle and a vulture, a hieroglyph whose meaning would be clarified only by contemporary studies.^{lvi} In his attempt Alciato felt supported by Erasmus, who had himself referred to Aesop in his note to the proverb "scarabaeus aquilam quaerit."^{lvii} In the *Adagia* Erasmus had also collected the Pythagorean *symbola*, hieroglyphics whose origin in the treatise *De Iside et Osiride* had been noted by Alciato.^{lviii} The emblem formed from the eagle and the beetle, "a minimis quoque timendum" [Beware of even the weakest foe: Emblem 169] is thus shown to be a direct result of the study of these works by Alciato, that is in the initial period of his emblematic poetry, when based on the *Adagia*, he wished to give a new interpretation of the symbols drawn from the *Hieroglyphica*.

Once going this route, our author would not hesitate to take even the last step, to compose his emblems in a manner completely independent of the hieroglyphs on which they were based. The fables and proverbs of antiquity offered a virtually limitless number of themes that could be turned into images. Moreover, the very form of the Greek Anthology was an invitation to draw freely from these themes. In fact, those emblems, whose titles were inspired by the *Adagia*, are often nothing more than translations of Greek epigrams.

^{lv} The moral of this fable is "The weak will sometimes find ways to avenge an insult, even upon the strong".

^{lvi} See Denis L. Drysdall, 'Erasmus on Tyranny and Terrorism: Scarabaeus aquilam quaerit and the Institutio principis christiani', *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook*, 2010, pp 89-101.

^{lvii} *Adagia* II, 871. This essay is one of the most celebrated in the *Adagia* denouncing tyranny in the fiercest terms but ending "but princes must be endured, lest tyranny give way to anarchy, a still greater evil".

^{lviii} From the 1508 edition onwards, the Pythagorean *symbola* were placed first in the *Adagia* thus testifying to their popularity,

CHAPTER 8

¶ THE HIEROGLYPHICS OF THE GERMAN AND FRENCH HUMANISTS

Since the beginning of the study of hieroglyphics, the inexhaustible quantities of Egyptian antiquities, real or alleged, available in Italy, had given to the humanists who lived there a prominent role. There were the Roman obelisks to give initial form and life to the information provided by the recently rediscovered classics. At the same time Cyriaco brought copies of his famous hieroglyphs to his friend Niccolò. Not only that. The comparison between Egyptian hieroglyphs and other ancient symbols that were preserved gave support to Alberti's supposition of a common origin as a result of which he recommended hieroglyphs to Colonna, Valturio and Mantegna as a model for the universal script. Annius devised his fictitious version of the history of their European origin based on the characters of a Roman relief that pretended to be Egyptian. Colonna composed his hieroglyphic inscriptions thanks to a careful study of all the ancient remains known in his day, and the same knowledge was the basis of research conducted by the Medicean and Aldine academies. Fasanini referred to them in his lectures on hieroglyphs, which indeed formed the starting point of the emblems of Alciato. This Italian supremacy lasted until modern times. It was not until the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt that scholars were directed to the innumerable treasures which had been preserved in the fatherland of the obelisks and were stimulated by the wish to compete in collecting such wealth. So, independently of the Italian tradition, modern Egyptology could develop in France.

In an era in which the most learned among the Italian humanists had toiled assiduously to interpret the hieroglyphs, north of the Alps the majority of readers of Macrobius, Ammianus, Diodorus, and so on, did not even possess a clear idea of the nature of the hieroglyph. Only the elite, those who had the privilege of a visit to Italy, had the opportunity to bring back to their own country images of the obelisks and at best also the symbols that were inscribed on them. But such knowledge quickly vanished, and for a long time there was even confusion as to how to understand the difference between obelisks, pyramids and columns. And since it was difficult to obtain these representations from Italy or even the Italian works on hieroglyphs described by the ancients they could not find fer-

tile ground although they were read with increasing curiosity.

It was only the *Hypnerotomachia* of Colonna, with its rich choice of obelisks and hieroglyphs, which provided the humanists beyond the Alps a clear idea of the hieroglyphic studies undertaken by their more fortunate colleagues who resided in Italy. The illustrations of Colonna also allowed the Germans and French to examine them from their desks and later to fully engage in this field of study. While for the Italians the work of Colonna constituted a novelty to be admired for the systematic exposition of Egyptian ideographs, beyond the Alps it provided the majority of scholars and artists the first ever images of hieroglyphic script. So do not be surprised if before the publication of the *Hypnerotomachia* the taste for medieval allegories and symbols was enjoyed without any hieroglyphic references. And we should not even be surprised if the diffusion of the *Hypnerotomachia* was said to confer a tendency everywhere to write Egyptian images precisely with those characteristics that it had introduced.

This special attention that Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia* was accorded outside Italy was due to the fact that it was the only available source for the knowledge of these developments in the field of hieroglyphics, a fact confirmed by the breadth and depth of the descriptions of its contents contained in the preceding sections, although this, in view of their relative brevity, might at first sight seem strange. But you have to imagine what questions Renaissance scholars had for hieroglyphics and how the humanists, not doubting the ancient Egyptian nature of Colonna's inventions, appreciated the importance of the text as the only readily accessible document of this admired sacred script for contemporary allegory in France and Germany. It also prepared the ground for the growth of interest in the wonders of the *Hieroglyphica* of Horapollon.

As the remaining presentation will also show, the cult of Egyptian studies based on the *Hypnerotomachia* and the *Horapollon* developed remarkably rapidly. This is connected to the fact that at the end of the fifteenth century hieroglyphic material flowed frequently from Italy to the Nordic countries, although the absence of Egyptian monuments had prevented any deeper appreciation of it. This material certainly influenced increasingly wider circles in latter years and one cannot ignore the growing number of students of this revitalized discipline which, after the publication of the works of Horapollon and Colonna, was received and diffused in a manner which reflected individual national characteristics.

☞ [Chapters that were to follow this part] ⁱ

ⁱ The second part of Volkmann cit. is an attempt to complete Giehlow's unfinished chapters particularly on the French and German reception of hieroglyphics.

The hieroglyphs and J. Reuchlin

The hieroglyphs and Celtes

The hieroglyphs – the translation of Trebatius and Peutinger

The hieroglyphs and the authors of the Triumphal Arch

The hieroglyphs and the allegories of the Triumphal Arch

The hieroglyphs and Dürer

The knowledge of the hieroglyphics and Geoffroy Tory

The French translation of “Hieroglyphica” of Horapollo and
“Hypnerotomachia”

The knowledge of the hieroglyphics of Rabelais and Johann
Fischart

◄ APPENDICES

☞ Appendix 1:

(not included in this edition) Ms. chart. V.E. 5 from the Biblioteca Nazionale of Naples. This Latin translation of the Horapollo is referred to in ch. 2 nt. 41 above (ms. 5) Giehlow quotes an extract from the 19th century biblical archaeologist J. Baptista di Rossi (see ch. 2 nt. 17 above) to the effect that this manuscript may have been brought back from Egypt by Cyriaco of Ancona. It contains the first 35 hieroglyphs of Book 1 of the Horapollo but there are several mistranslations from the Greek to the Latin. Giehlow provides the titles to the hieroglyphs and a discussion as to the provenance of the manuscript.

☞ Appendix 2:

(not included in this edition) Calcagnini's letter to his nephew Thomas Calcagnini (undated). This includes Giehlow's commentary and reprinting of the letter taken word for word from Calcagnini's *Epistolicarum quaestionum et epistolarum familiarum libri XVI* Basel: Froben, 1544 p. 18 ff. Calcagnini translates just the chapter headings of Horapollo into Latin but not the text. In Giehlow's opinion the translation is based on the Greek edition of Aldus of 1505. Giehlow gives the variants in the translation from both Trebatius and Fasanini.

☞ Appendix 3:

(not included in this edition) Chapter titles of the Horapollo in Latin.

☞ Appendix 10:

(not included in this edition) A German index of the motifs of the Horapollo. This list was compiled by Giehlow's editor Arpad Weixlgärtner.

☞ Appendix 11:

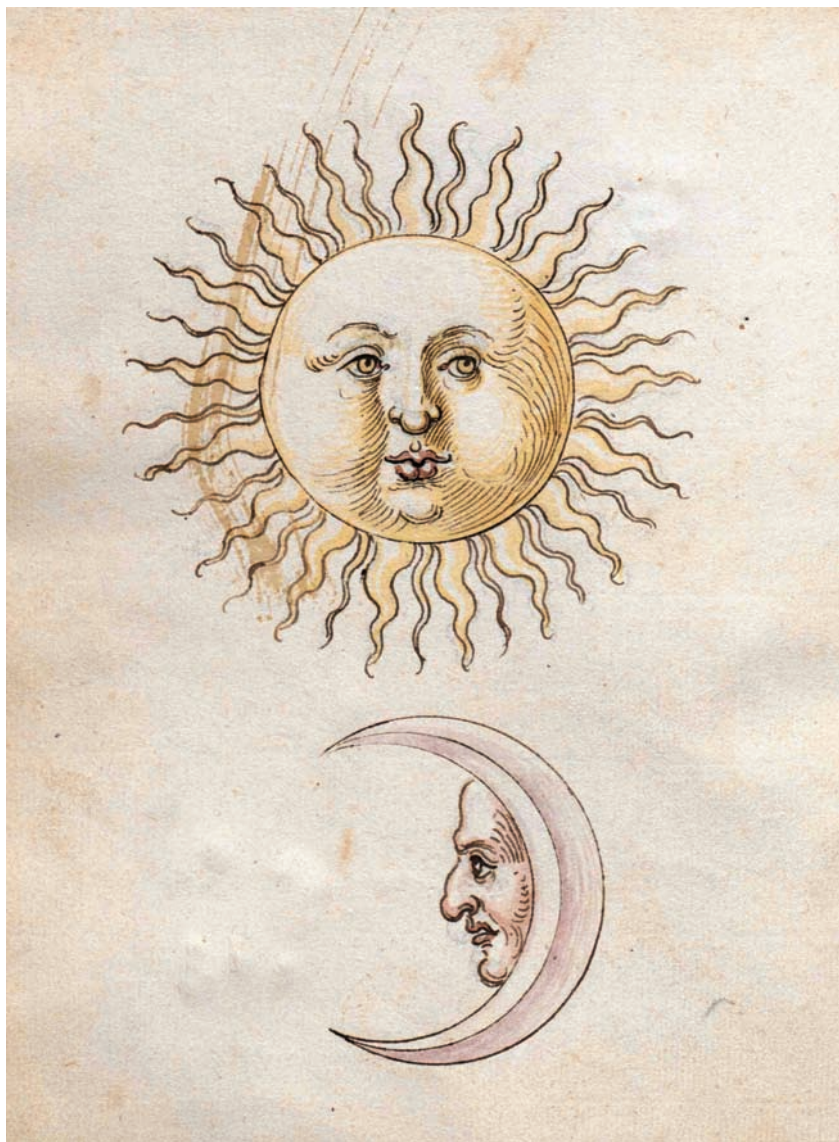
(not included in this edition) Images from other parts of the Triumphal Arch, images of other works by Dürer, from the French editions of the Horapollo by Kerver and of other artists.

☞ Appendix 12:

(not included in this edition) The Postscript by Arpad Weixlgärtner, Giehlow's editor and literary executor. This is referred to in the Introduction to the present work.

Appendix 4:

Giehlow's commentary and description of Pirckheimer's ms. of the Horapollo Latin translation (Vienna Cod. 3255) with the translation and Dürer's images which are reproduced in the following pages. The images in this Appendix are included by permission of the Austrian National Library.



Quomodo aevum designetur How eternity is designated



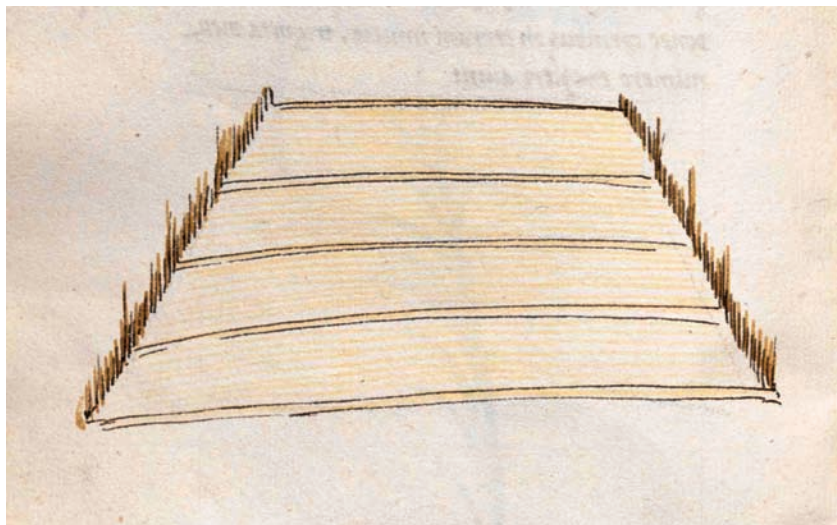
Quomodo mundum *How the universe is depicted*



Quomodo annum *How the year is depicted*



Quomodo mensem *How the month is represented*



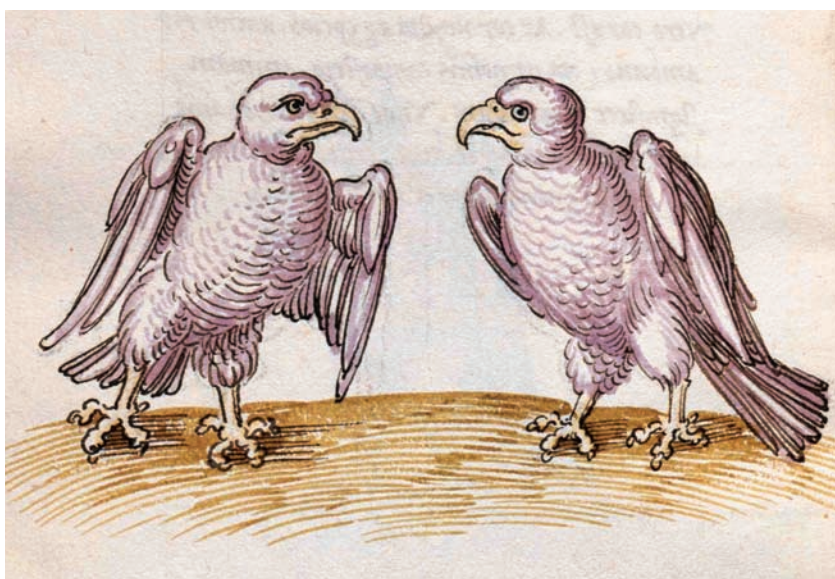
Quomodo annum intercalarem *How they represent a leap year*



Quid demonstrent, accipitrem pingentes *What they mean by painting a hawk*



Quomodo animam designent *How they designate the soul*



Quomodo Martem et Venerem *How they indicate Mars and Venus*



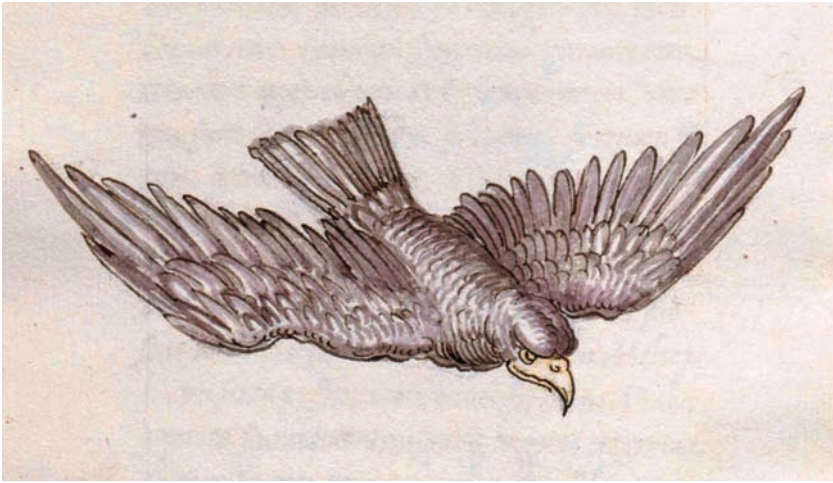
[No caption – Another representation of Mars and Venus]



Quomodo nupcias *How they indicate marriage*



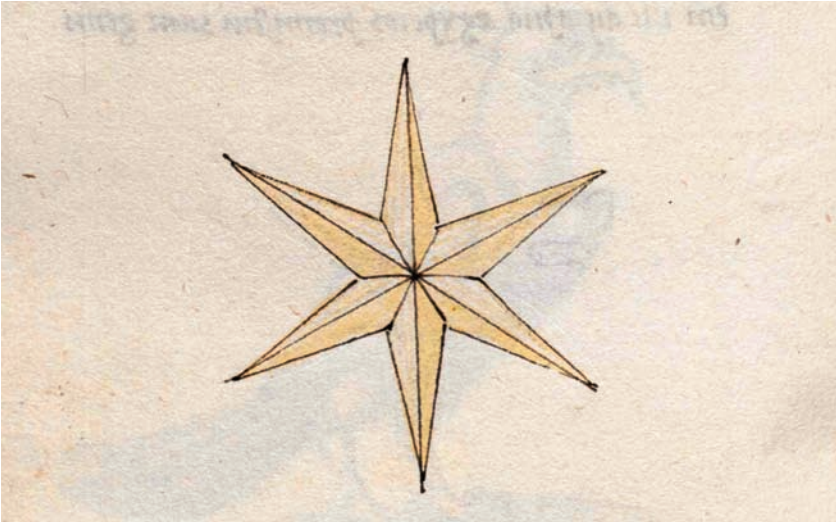
Quomodo unigenitum *How they depict the self-begotten*



Quid vulture pingentes demonstrant *What they mean by a vulture*



Quomodo Vulc anum pingunt *How they depict Hephaistus*



Quid stellam pingentes ostendunt *What they mean by a star*



Quid ostendant cynocephalum pingentes *What they mean by depicting a cynocephalus*



Quomodo lune pingunt exortum *How they depict the rising of the moon*



Quomodo equinoctia duo *How they show the two equinoxes*



Quomodo iram ostendunt *How they show anger*



Quomodo fortitudinem pingunt *How they depict strength*



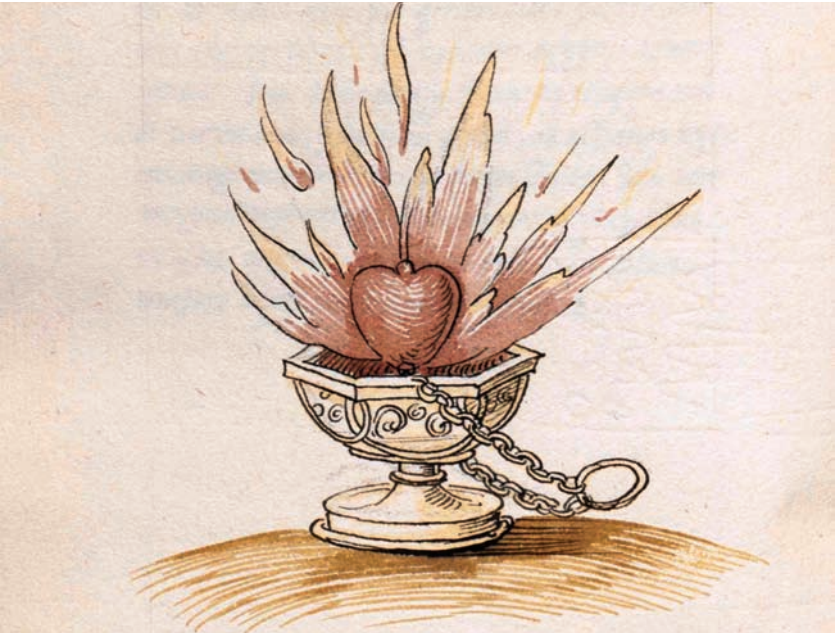
Quomodo vigilantem *How they depict vigilance*



Quomodo terribilem *How they depict fear*



Quomodo Nili incrementum *How they show the rising of the Nile*



Quomodo Aegyptum pingunt *How they depict Egypt*



Quomodo hominem, qui nunquam ex patria exiverit *How they show a man who has never left his country*



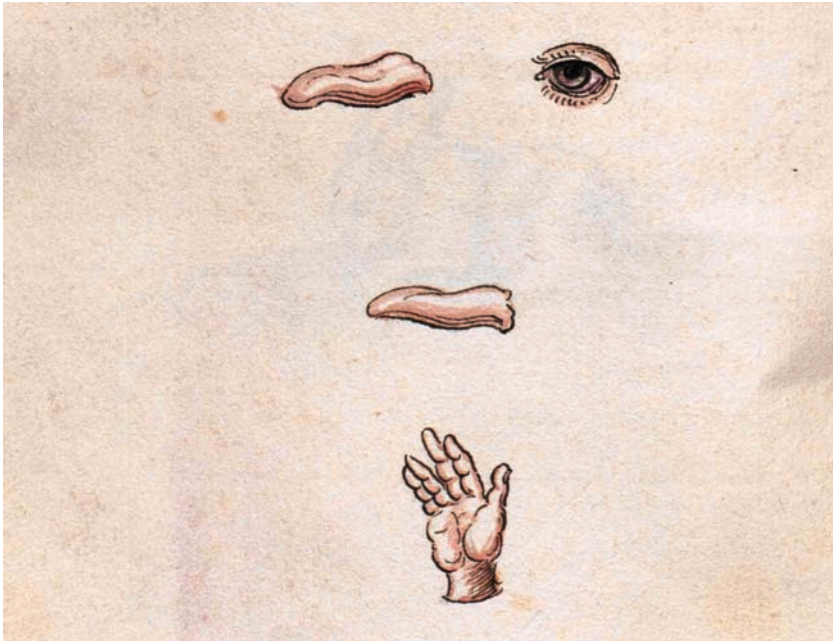
Quomodo securitatem *How they show safety*



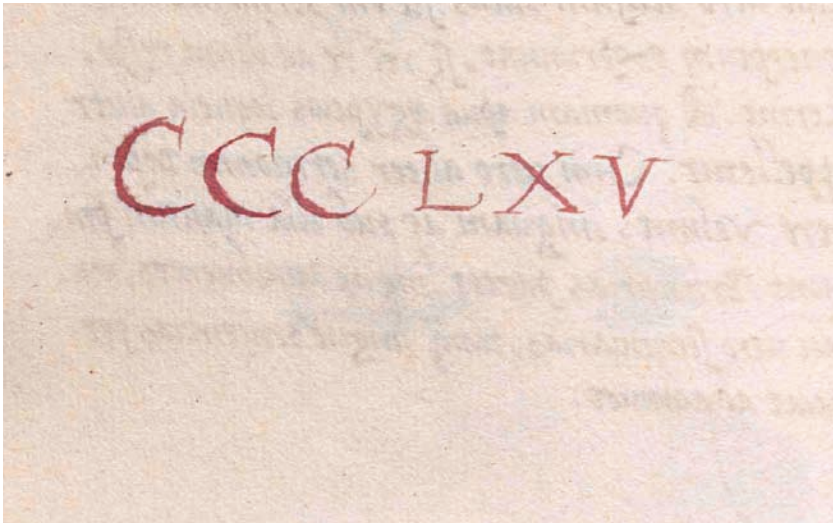
Quomodo hominem deformem *How they show a deformed man*



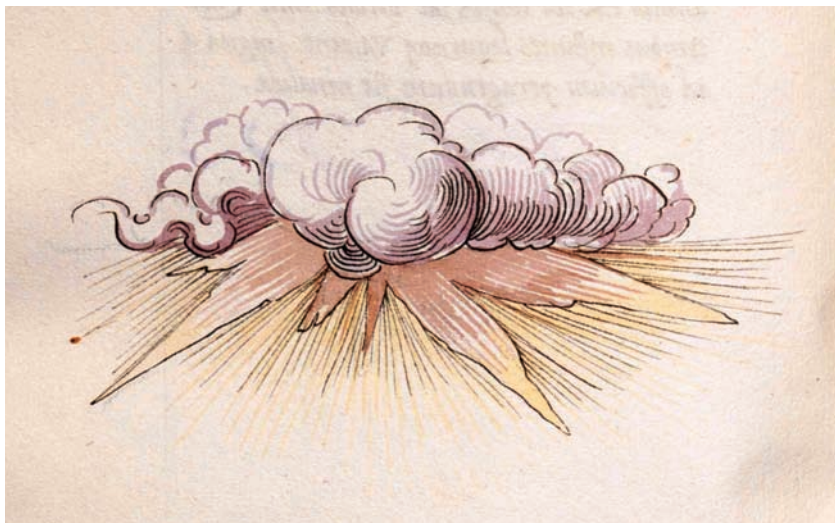
Quomodo rem apertam *How they depict an opening*



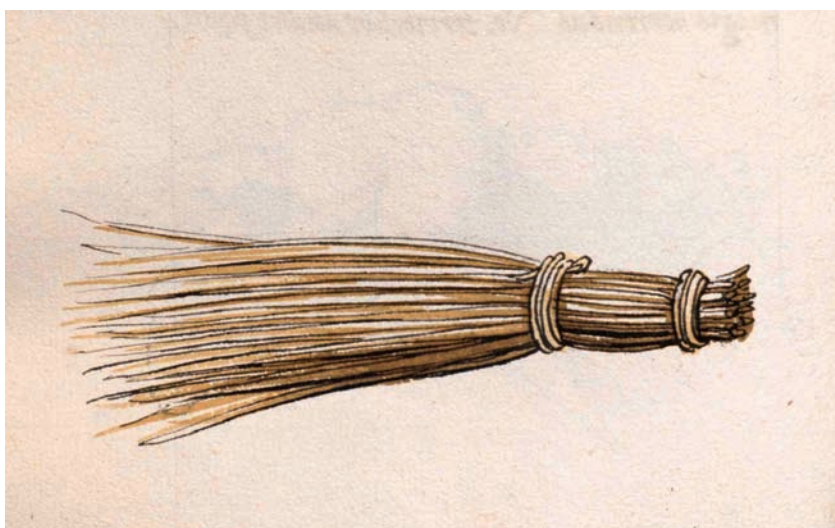
Quomodo sermonem *How they depict speech*



Quomodo rem mutam *How they depict dumbness*



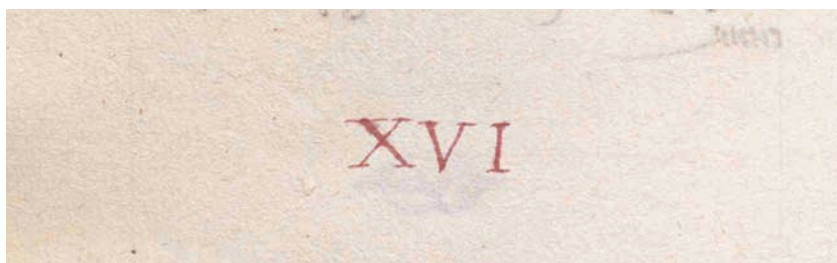
Quomodo vocem a longe *How they depict a distant voice*



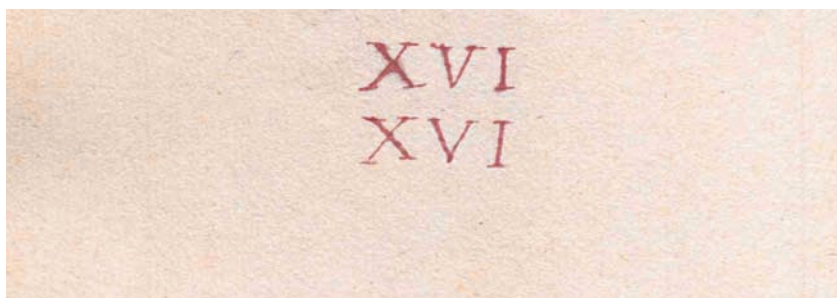
Quomodo archaeogeniam *How they show ancient origin*



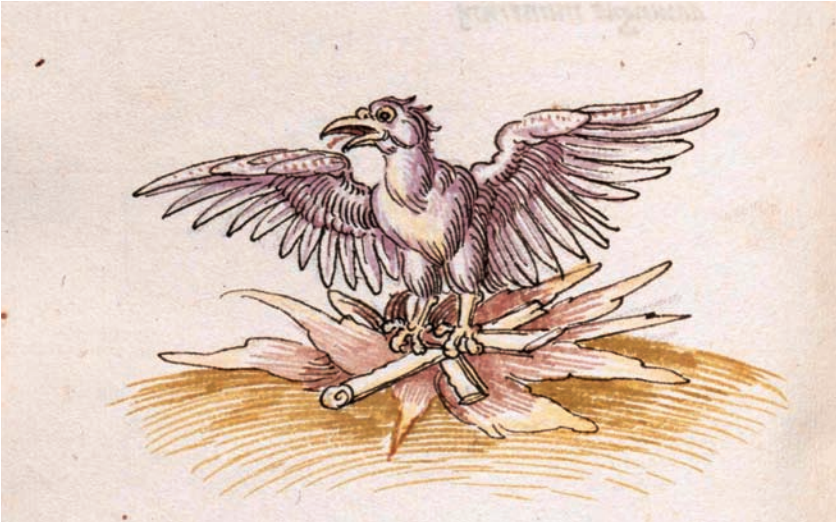
Quomodo gustum *How they depict taste*



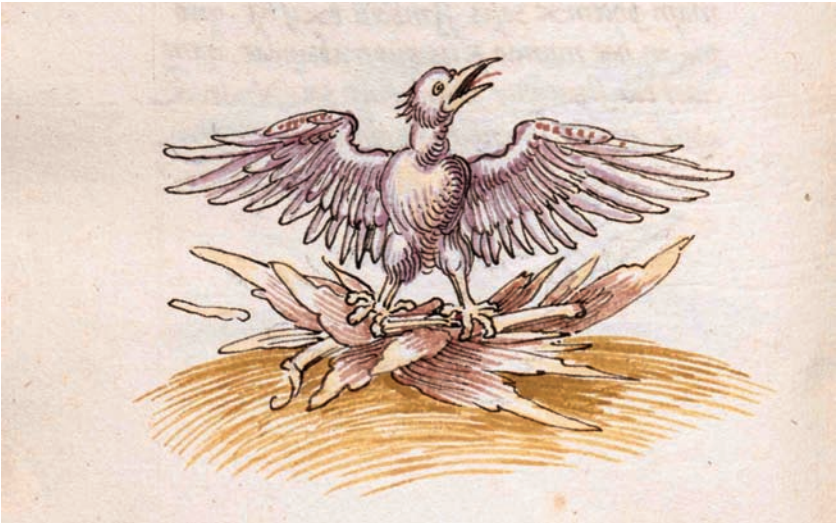
Quomodo voluptatem *How they depict pleasure*



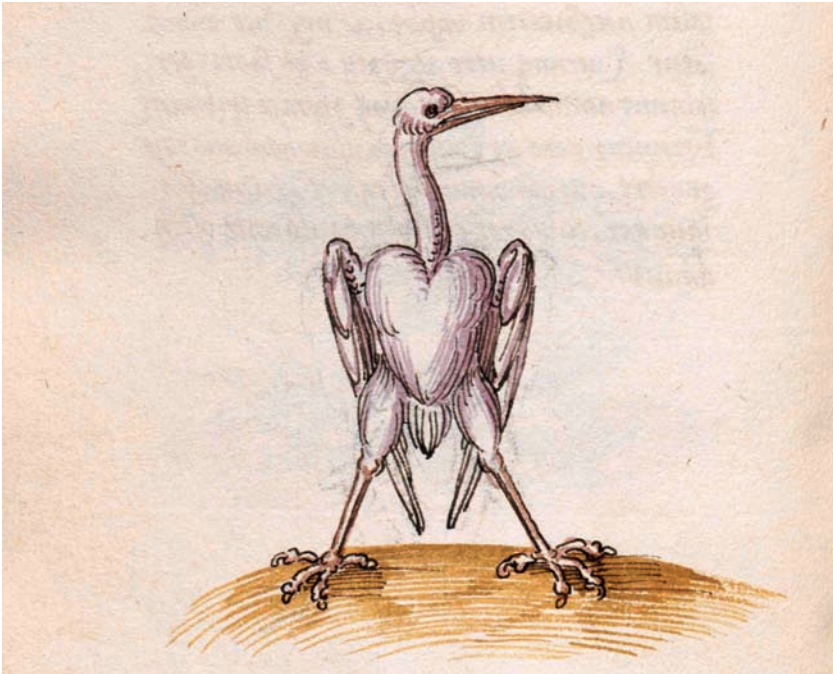
Quomodo coitum *How they show intercourse*



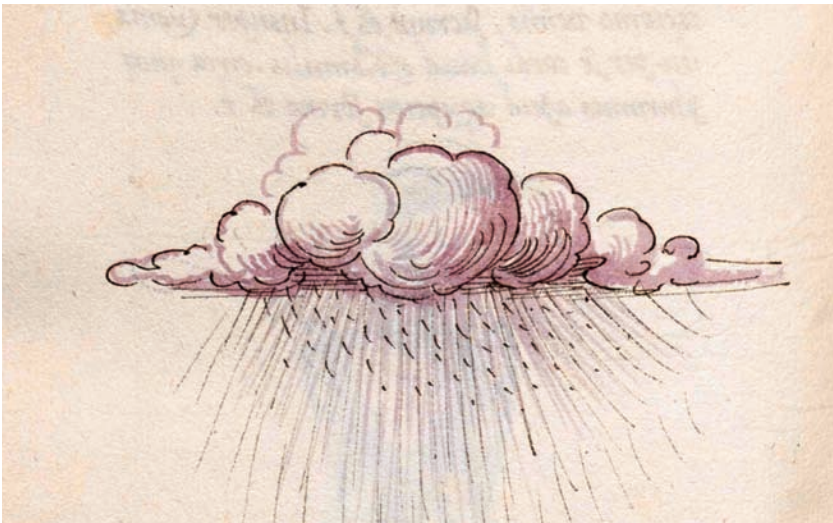
Quomodo animam diu hic versateam *How they show the soul remaining here a long time*



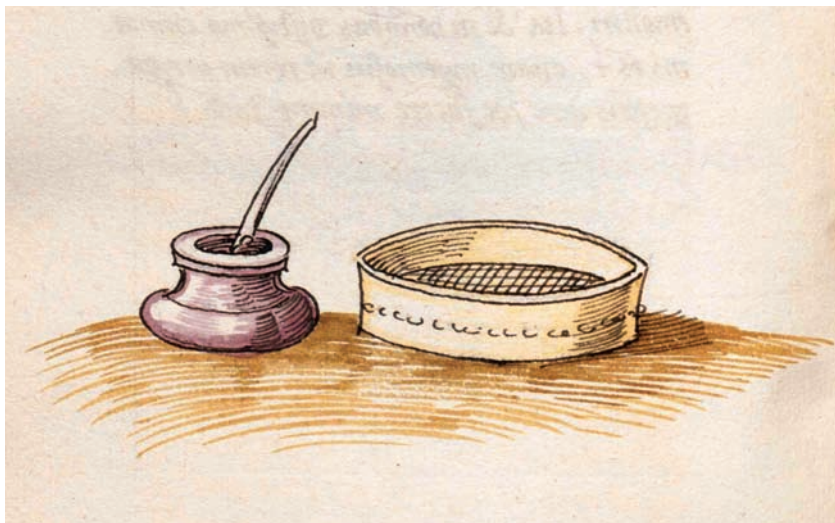
Quomodo tarde ab externis oris revertentem *How they show a man returning after a long time abroad*



Quomodo cor pingunt *How they depict a heart*



Quomodo disciplinam *How they show education*



Quomodo litteras Aegyptiacus *How they show the Egyptian letters*



Quomodo sacras litteras [scribam] *How they depict a sacred scribe*



Quomodo ostendunt principem vel iudicem *How they show a prince or a judge*



Quomodo significant audituum *How they depict the temple guardian*



Quomodo manifestant horoscopum *How they show a horoscopist*

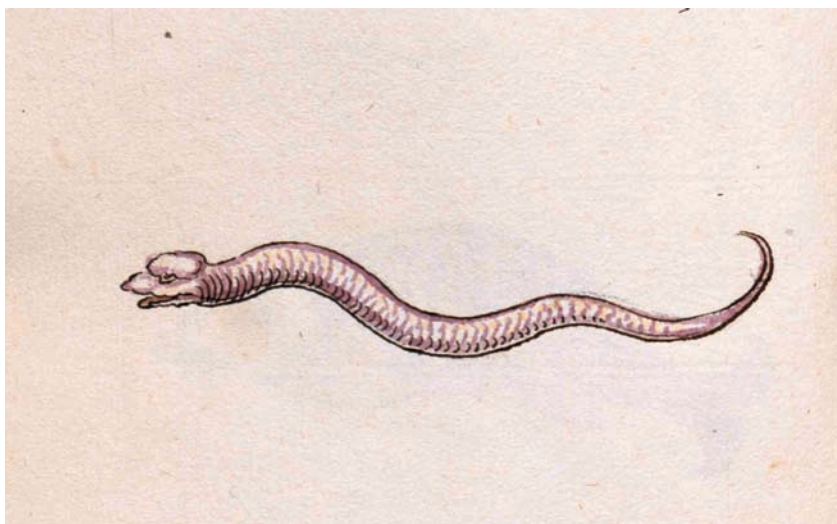


Quomodo ostendunt ignoranciam¹ *How they show ignorance*

1. In the Aldus, 1505 this Chapter symbolizes 'Purity'.



Quomodo indicent scelestum et abhominandum *How they indicate wickedness and abomination*



Quomodo os depingunt *How they depict the mouth*



Quomodo virilitatem cum modestia *How they depict strength and temperance*



Quomodo auditum *How they show hearing*



Quomodo pudenda viri fecundi *How they depict the member of a fertile man*



Quomodo ostendunt immundiciam *How they show impurity*



Quomodo interitum *How they show disappearance*



Quomodo pertinaciam *How they depict impudence*



Quomodo noticiam *How they show knowledge*



Quomodo filium depingunt *How they depict a son*



Quomodo dementem *How they show foolishness*



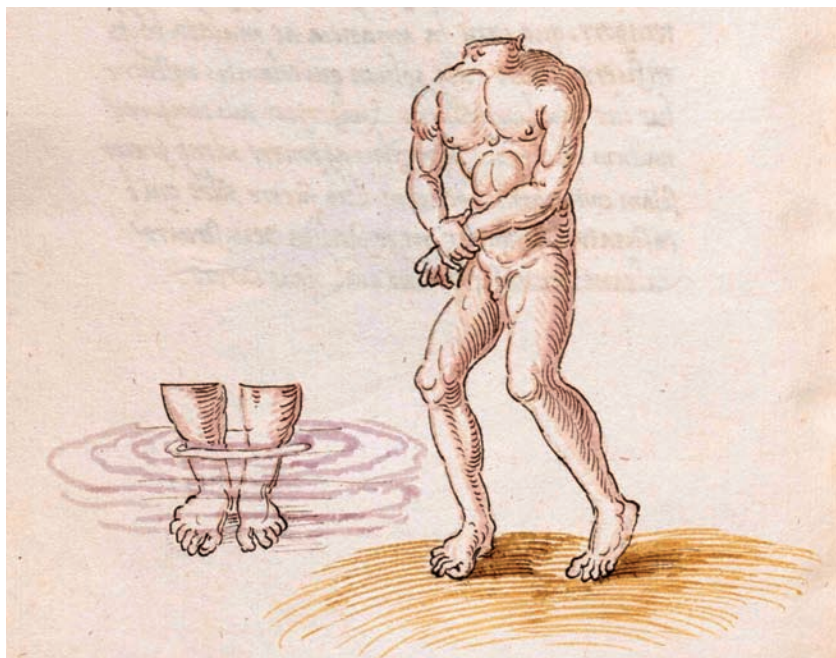
Quomodo gratitudinem ostendant *How they express gratitude*



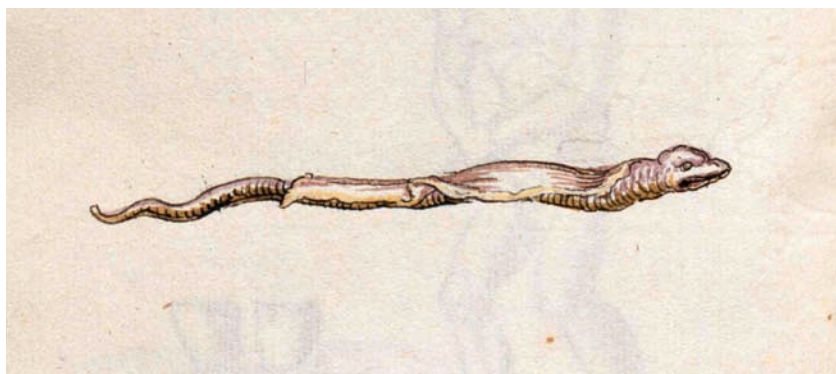
Quomodo iniustum et ingratum *How they show an unjust and ungrateful man*



Quomodo ingratum depingunt *How they show ingratitude for kindness*



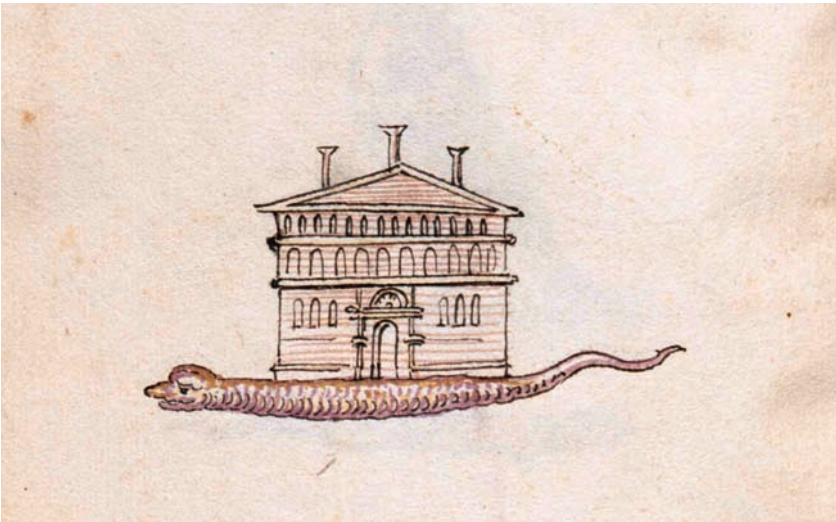
Quomodo quod impossibile significant *How they signify the impossible*



Quomodo regem pessimum *How they depict a very bad king*



Quomodo regem custodem *How they show a guardian king*



Quomodo regem universo orbi imperatorem *How they show a king who is ruler of the world*



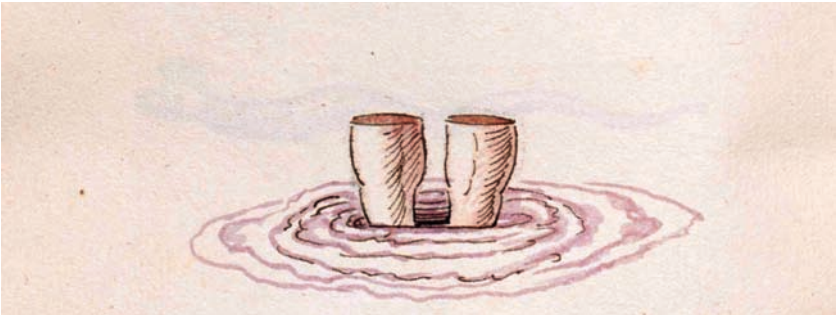
Quomodo populum regi obedientem *How they show a people obedient to a king*



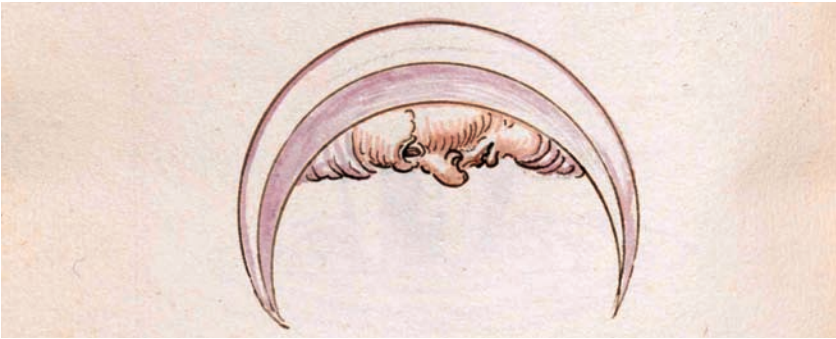
Quomodo regem parti orbis dominantem *How they show a king who rules part of the world*



Quomodo omnipotentem *How they depict the Almighty*



Quomodo fullonem *How they represent a fuller*



Quomodo mensem *How they show a month*



Quomodo rapacem, faedundum vel insanum *How they show a rapacious, fertile or insane man*



Quomodo ortum *How they show sunrise*



Quomodo occasum *How they represent sunset*



Quomodo tenebras *How they express shadows*

BOOK II [NO IMAGE]

Quid stellam pingentes ostendant *How they depict a star*

Appendix 6:

Drawings by Dürer from a fragment of Adalbert E. V. Lanna. Giehlow also includes illustrations of Pirckheimers handwriting on the reverse of these fragments



Fig. 38 Drawings by Dürer illustrating the Horapollo from a fragment of Adalbert E. V. Lanna

Appendix 7:

Drawings by Dürer from a fragment of Molly Blasius, Braunschweig (see p. 20 above). Giehlow also includes illustrations of Pirckheimer's handwriting on the reverse of these fragments.

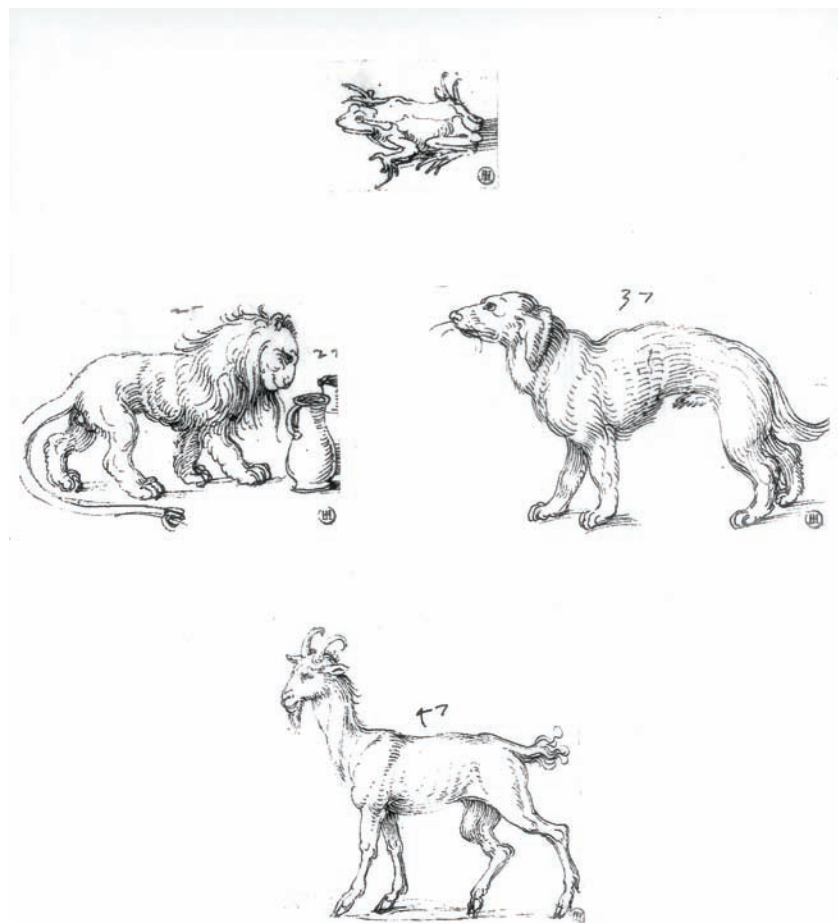


Fig. 39 Drawings by Dürer from a fragment of Molly Blasius, Braunschweig

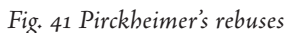
Appendix 8:

Drawing by Dürer illustrating the Horapollo. Giehlow also shows an extract from Pirckheimer's translation in his handwriting from the reverse of this illustration.



Fig. 40 Drawing by Dürer illustrating the Horapollo

(not included in this edition except the following examples of Pirckheimer's rebuses) Pirckheimer's manuscript draft of his translation of the Panegyric on the Triumphal Arch (see Fig. 1 above) includes his use of rebuses representing the different elements of the Panegyric (from Nurnberg, Stadtbibliothek: Pirckheimer-Papiere, Nr. 296). The subsequent pages of this Appendix give a translation of these rebuses in Latin and German.



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UP: University Press

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